OTHERVERSE AMERICA

Dilation and Evacuation Abortion (D&E) of
Fetus
KEEP THE CHOICE YOURS
SAVE ROE NOW

CHRIS A. FIELD

OTHERVERSE GAMES

OGL
3.5 SYSTEM COMPATIBLE

The Otherverse America
Campaign Setting

Concept and Execution: Chris A. Field

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Design Diaries, Supplemental Material and Errata at
www.otherversegames.blogspot.com

Requires the use of the D20 Modern Core
Rulebook, Published by Wizards of the Coast

Otherverse America

"The Second American Civil War began just after 10 am CST on January 22, 2061. A historic, highly controversial abortion clinic on Ogalada Souix reservation land was wiped off the map, and it's RAINBOW Liberty defenders were slaughtered by a post-human terrorist codenamed Life Tank."
-wikipedia.mesh, circa 2107

A Soldier's Book of Shadows

"Each woman must be free to make her own choice; no man may safely decide for her; she must give life gladly to be able to give it well."
-C. Gasquoine Hartley, The Truth About Women (1913)

Closed: The Manual of Pro-Life Tactical Doctrine

"Outside the comfort zone, the spirit of murder grew, unchecked by those called to establish the law of God."
-Neal Horsley, circa 2000

The American Abortion War began on January 22, 2061, and ended exactly thirty years to the day later. Thirty years of brutal sectarian violence destroyed the nation, fracturing 21st century America into two diametrically opposed, heavily armed warring camps: the Lifer and Choicer nations. The differences between Pagan and Christian have been sharpened to a killing edge, with hatreds well nurtured by three decades of assassination and counter-assassination, of urban warfare, sociological terrorism and memetic combat.

Today, it is the year 2107 C.E., less than two decades after the Treaty of Boston ended the War. The Choicer nation triumphed, barely, thanks to the sheer power of the metahuman soldiers the pagan society was able to field. Today, the Choicers are the dominant social force in America, and have begun rebuilding the battered nation in accordance with their ethos and traditions. The Lifers are an oppressed underclass, suffering the economic and social consequences of fighting on the losing side. They remain defiant, awaiting the day they can finally bring down the Choicer government.

Neither side believes the violence has truly ended. The Abortion War has only gone cold. Espionage, deniable ops, and political, social and economic backstabbing have replaced tank battles and air strikes as the weapon of choice. Choicer priestesses are murdered in their homes by Lifer fanatics; Lifer politicians are targeted for pre-emptive assassination by the Choicer power structure. The warring pseudo-nations have used this period of detente and quiet war to rebuild, to heal from the massive injuries the War inflicted on both sides. Idealists and moderates struggle to forge a true peace, to transform this new Cold War into something better: a lasting, just peace.

Othervere America is the core sourcebook for the Otherverse America campaign setting. Like the world of 2107, Otherverse America is divided into multiple books, each describing a specific faction, their goals, tactics, gear, heroes and villains. This sourcebook describes Otherverse America in as a military sci-fi setting, and provides a battle-field look at the setting's history and soldier's eye view of its core conflicts. While Chapter One: Sexually Transmitted Future provides an in-depth look at civilian life in the Otherverse, Chapters Two and Three detail life within the Lifer or Choicer military, and provides suggestion for building powerful, post-human soldiers.

What You Need to Play

Most (if not all) of the world information you need to explore the Otherverse America campaign setting is found in this book. Specific information about APEX and the United States government has been left out for space reasons, and will be released in an upcoming sourcebook. However, a veteran GM should be able to cobble together a pretty workable version of the Fed-Gov military from info found in this book.

The Otherverse America campaign setting draws heavily on the freelance work I've done over the last few years. As such, almost any D20 Modern material I've written for LPJ Designs or Skortched Urf Studios can easily be integrated into your campaigns. That said, there are a three particular books I recommend you pick up, because they provide a host of new character options for Otherverse gamers.

Psi-Watch also from Otherverse Games, was released not only as a stand-alone product, but also to be the 'engine' which runs the Otherverse America setting. If you're interested in playing a psionic character, or custom-building a Shell suit of your own, you need the rules elements found within Psi-Watch. The advanced classes found in Psi-Watch are native to the Otherverse, while the 100+ new military feats provide interesting tactical options for the setting's soldiers and super-terrorists.

Guide to the Known Galaxy is a sourcebook for this setting, which focuses on Otherverse America's cosmology and galactic history. If interested in playing an alien PC, or in manifesting Lifechained super-abilities, you need this sourcebook. GTKG also includes full statistics for

FROM PSI-WATCH

FROM GUIDE TO THE KNOWN GALAXY

some major setting NPCs: Commander Roe Athene and Artemsis, and includes a bestiary of some fearsome non-human adversaries, if you want to take a break from urban warfare and just blast some xeno-monsters.

Dept 7 Tech Update: Cybernetics (Skortched Urf Studios). This freelance work began my working relationship with Mark Catho and Skortched Urf. Providing a new way of looking at D20-style bionics, this short sourcebook includes full statistics for dozens of new implants and integrated weapons. Many of the heroes and villains of the Otherverse enhance their natural gifts with cyber-tech, and the items in this sourcebook are a natural fit for members of the Full Conversion Cyborg (or Light Reconstruction Cyborg, from Psi-Watch) player species.

Intangibles

Throughout the text, you'll find short sidebars calling out the major tropes and motifs of Otherverse America. Some of these you probably noticed for your self, others might be food for thought you missed. None of them have much in the way of game effect, but these intangibles can help bring your campaign to life, whether you're a player or a gamemaster. Give 'em a read.

Chapter One: Sexually Transmitted Future

2078.
San Francisco, CA.
Choicer Territory.

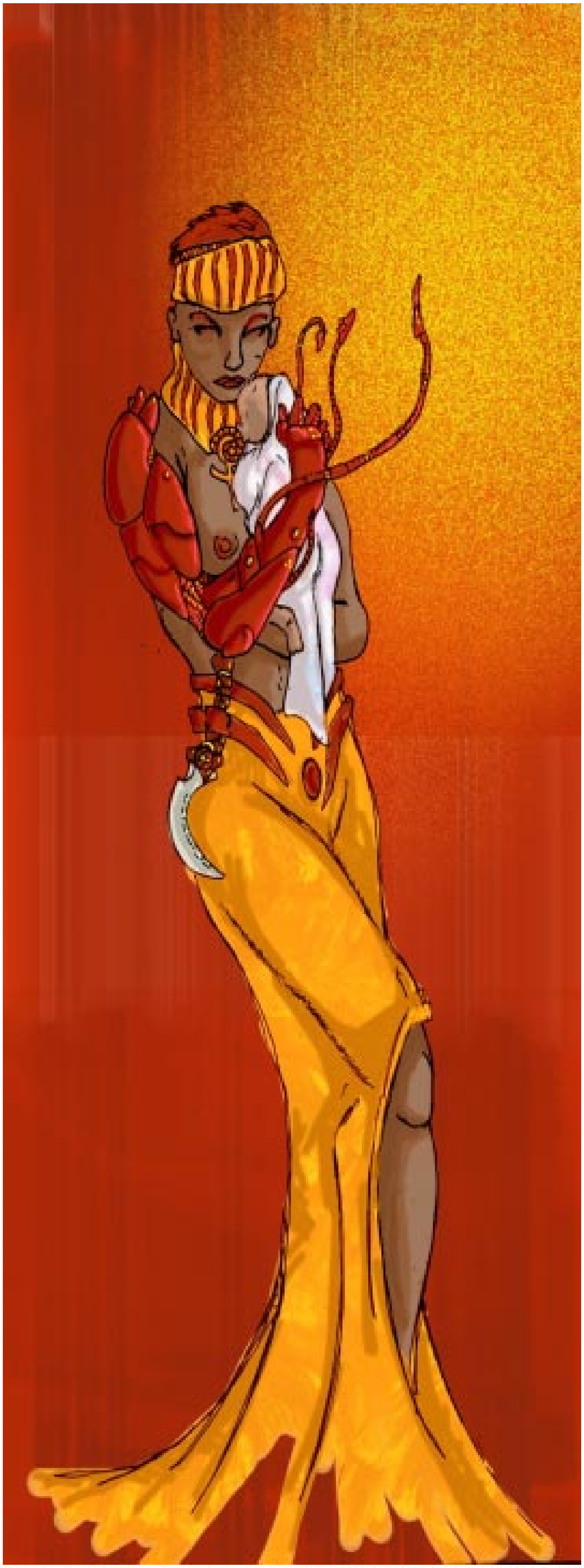
Blood.

A single, thin rivulet of blood curls along the surface of the warm, clear water. The candle flames dancing on either side of the long, shallow birthing pool are reflected in that same water. And reflected in the blood as well, dancing crimson and gold on a deeper, earthier red.

Blood. Birth is always bloody.

A woman half lays, half squats in the birthing pool, her caramel skin purpling with effort as she pushes out her child. The woman is nude except for the ochre and crimson wishing-runes painted across her smooth, distended belly and down the long sloping curve of her mother-breasts Bone-white anesthetic neural taps are glued to her temples and the base of her spine.

Tendrils of liquid plastic exactly the same shade of crimson as her blood crawl across the straining, sweating woman's belly. These tendrils caress the pregnant woman's brown skin with a soft, pneumatic hiss, and as the tendrils move and writhe, and push painlessly into the woman's abdomen, gently shoving aside muscle and fat deposits to view the precious cargo within that distended belly, their colors and patterns change. The tendrils pulse with yellow and red and orange and ochre light; their colors match the flickering illumination of the candle-light perfectly. And as these tendrils continue their diagnosis and inventory of the brown woman's body, other tendrils slide beneath the bloody water of the birthing pool, to hold the birth canal open.



The priestess-midwife smiles serenely at the biometric data her sensory tendrils are feeding her. Without taking her eyes off her sweat-slick patient, the midwife goes into her self, collating the data her bionic arm and its sensory tendrils is feeding her. She scans blood pressure data, and pulse rate data, and pheromone trace tracks, and galvanic skin response and Krillian aura readings and a real-time MRI-6 of the birth and is well pleased with the results. All her tendrils' results match exactly what her human eyes are telling her: a few more minutes of effort and May Feneris would be able to rest, and look into her daughter's eyes for the first time.

Seven bleeding minutes later, the midwife was right.

The girl-child's first screams were long and loud, and May Feneris couldn't help but laugh for joy when she heard them. They were gasping, exhausted laughs, but they were still beautiful sounds. The exhausted woman lay her head against the sloping side of the birthing pool, and just listened for a moment. Finally, May raised her head tiredly, watching the white-clad priestess approach, a tiny caramel bundle cradled in her arms. The priestess-midwife's bionic arm had a human form again, its sensory/surgical tentacles retracted deep into its artificial bone marrow. As the priestess steps forward through the warm waters, she wipes the blood and mucus from the newborn's skin, her artificial fingers measuring every aspect of the child's health even as she did so.

With a last smiling glance at the writing newborn, the midwife hands the child to her mother. May Feneris looks into her daughter's confused fire-colored eyes, so much like her own. The newborns eyes squeeze indignantly shut as the chamber's walls began to glow with a soft milk-white radiance. Red plastic fingers trace the little girl's forehead, leaving twin streaks of spiraling blood-paint upon the pale caramel skin. As the lights continue to rise, the priestess looks into the tired new mother's eyes, and speaks, though she is speaking to the child, and to those waiting in the shadows.

"We welcome you to our world. We celebrate your awakening and rejoice that you've chosen to be born among us. We welcome you, and share our wisdom, our love, our passion and our strength, and hope you will soon share yours with us."

May Feneris is nodding solemnly, her hands stroking the newborn's face, as the air and water seem to solidify around her. Iridescent water, glistening with oily rainbows, sluices over her shoulders, over her breasts, over her belly, and with a sound like a moth's wings, becomes a long white robe. The robe knits itself around her, absorbing the sweat and birth-blood covering her body to increase its own mass. May feels the comforting constriction of the white cloth as the priestess continues the simple rite.

"We welcome you to the sun, to the air, to life, to humanity. Share the wonders of the Mother's world with us, with your human family, and with your own loving mother."

The words said, the priestess rises from the half crouch she was in before the mother. Water sluices off her surgeon's body stocking. The midwife pats the child's head one last time and looks into the mother's eyes.

"Have you chosen a name for her yet?"

May swallows, her throat dry with effort and emotion and chokes out, "C-Cassie. Her name is Cassie Andra Feneris."

And there is gentle applause from the audience as the lights come all the way up, and the skylight above them all irises open, allowing silvery moonlight into the birthing chamber.

Twenty two years ago, May Feneris had been conceived at the Beltane fires, and so, finally had her daughter. Cassie had no father. Cassie had a dozen fathers. Cassie was the well-begotten daughter of the Horned God. All these things were simultaneously true and untrue. None of these things mattered, and they all mattered very much.

Those who had attended the Beltane rite with May were there in the close, humid chamber. Male and female, her lovers, her friends, her comrades in arms and coven-mates had joined her. They had come to support her, to pray with and for her, to work the ritual and participate in the Covenant's first and most primal rite, and they had come to greet her new daughter, their new sister, their newest hope.

Some of the assembled men and women were nude, bodies daubed with crimson and gold paint; they were aborigines studded with cutting edge cybernetics and implanted weapontry. Others wore elaborate ritual robes in autumnal colors, a blunt edged atheme worn on their hips. One by one, they all entered the warm water, softly kissing mother and daughter in turn and saying the expected words of welcome.

Outside the birthing chamber, the Abortion War was in its 17th year. Ideals had degraded into statemate, and America had died choking up its own soul. Inside though, they could pretend none of that mattered. Inside the chamber, Cassie Andra Feneris is two minutes human, the newest citizen of the Covenant nation, the newest Choicer, and her mother rejoices.

Birth is hope. It's the hope of the soldier on the battlefield, knowing that reinforcements are en route. It's the hope of the idealist, that this birth, this child, will be the one to find a way to end the fighting. It's the mother's hope that her child will grow up happy and strong.

And in that chamber, tonight, the assembled coven rejoices in that hope. And outside, the War raged on, but that didn't matter.

Hope had been reborn.

Gene-War and Panaceas

"I tried to apply that kind of thinking to all the characters… how they would breed, and what would result."
-Alex Ross

The human genome had been completely mapped by dawn of the new millenium, though complete understanding of how different genes interacted didn't come until decades later. Even early genetic therapies focused on finding cures for (or mitigating the effects of) hereditary diseases, eliminating old scourges like senility, the pre-disposition to certain cancers, sickle cell anemia and Down's Syndrome.

By the mid 2010s, previously fatal genetic diseases could be detected and fought in utero. One by one, the plagues that had killed and deformed were eliminated. Genetic therapies found cures for most cancers, AIDs and a host of other illnesses. Disease immunity was encoded into the genome of the recipients, and specially tailored viruses, based upon the genetic structure of sexually transmitted diseases were injected into the cured. Not only would these first patients be immunized against disease, they could pass their immunities along to their sex partners, allowing the beneficial genemod to quickly and cheaply permeate throughout human society.

This minor genemod of a large, existing population represented the first wide-scale genetic alteration of the human population. In effect, science had created the first **artificial** human subspecies- *homo sapiens panacean*. Healthier than unmodified humans, homo sapiens panacean is today the dominant strain of humanity. Unmodified humans are only found in a handful of places, in the most isolated of populations. While new diseases evolved to prey on humanity, many of the old plagues have long since vanished thanks to this early genemod.

Starting Occupation: Genetic Licensor

With most of the human race genetically engineered to one degree or another, pure-strain humans are a valuable commodity. Geneticists often recruit from within Lifer Enclaves and other non-modified populations, paying the few unmodified humans they can find for the rights to their genome. Research on licensed gene-lines is vital to the genetic engineering industry, but finding unmodified candidates to use as a control group is growing more difficult with each passing year, as the gene-revolution finally makes inroads into the Enclaves.

Prerequistes: Unmodified human species. Character cannot have any gene-mods or other genetic enhancements at character creation, though they may under go elective genetic engineering later.

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Diplomacy, Gamble, Handle Animal, Knowledge (earth & life sciences, history, popular culture, streetwise, theology & philosophy), Profession

Reputation Bonus Increase: +0

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

Player Species: Homo Sapiens Panacean

By 2107 C.E., Panacean humans are the dominant strain of humanity. Unmodified homo sapiens are a rarity, usually found only in remote, rural areas, or among populations that rejected the gene-mod for ideological reasons, such as the Lifer Enclaves. The greatest concentration of un-modified, 'old-stock' human beings in North America is found within the Lifer Enclaves at Pensacola, FL and Atlanta, GA.

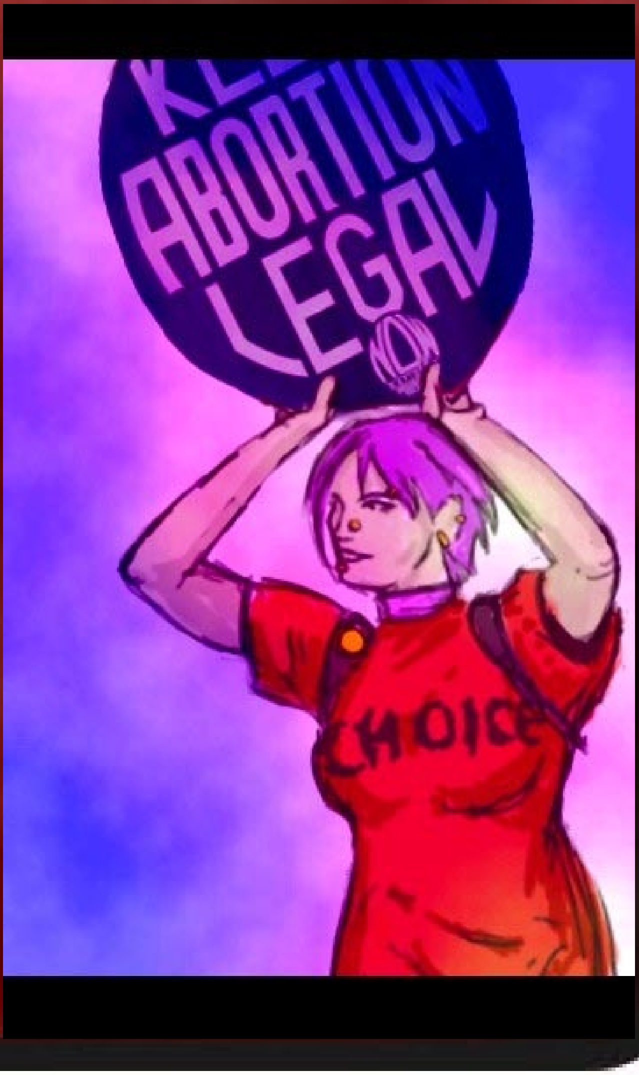
Modern Panacean humans look identical to their non-modified human cousins. However, the first versions of the genemod had several minor flaws, which were quickly corrected during later immunizations. Some older Panaceans bear minor physical mutations associated with the genemod; in most cases, these deformities are limited to blue-green striations, resembling tiger stripes, which cover the mutant's face and chest. Only a handful of modern Panaceans retain this unique visual trait.

During the 2010s and 2020s, "Panacean Stripes" were an especially desirable trait- they marked a potential lover as an absolutely safe partner, and heralded a new post-AIDS era of sexual freedom. Even those who didn't manifest the stripes naturally used make-up, tattooing and cosmetic genemods to imitate the appearance of those who did. Today, the fad for striped lovers is a thing of the past, as society has grown to accept (and take for granted) this omnipresent gene-mod.

Panacean humans have all common human racial traits, including four bonus skill points at first level, an additional skill point each succeeding level points and a bonus feat at first level. Panacean humans gain the following additional racial trait:

Disease Resistance (EX): Panaceans have extraordinarily strong immune systems. They are immune to all non-magical terrestrial sexually transmitted diseases. However, they can still succumb to alien diseases, bio-warfare agents and magical diseases. They receive a +4 racial bonus on FORT saves made to resist contracting other forms of disease.

A Panacean's body is laced with a genetically modified form of the resilient herpes virus; this re-sequenced disease causes them no harm and has no ill effects. However, any human or genetically similar humanoids, such as Half Gray, Patriot mutates (described in Psi-Watch), Half Elves and other hybrid species who has unprotected sexual intercourse with a Panacean also gains this racial trait, as well as the ability to spread this minor gene-mod.



By 2020, genetic engineering became **THE** hot new military science, and the first Powered supersoldiers had been decanted. Today, it's 2107 and decades of urban warfare and post-human evolution have fundamentally altered the human genome.

Even before the Abortion War began, the American government and other powerful entities had used cutting edge gene-surgery and cyber-enhancement to create ever more powerful and efficient soldiers. When the War began in earnest, the most committed, best-trained soldiers on each side were enhanced with revolutionary nanonics and alien genetic material. These genetically superior soldiers are referred to as Powereds- metahumans who are the unwitting heirs to the power of the Old Gods. Many Powered wield artificial analogues of ancient and powerful Lifechain mutations.

Today, there may be as many as nine to ten **million** Powereds scattered across the planet. The best-known Powereds are the military heroes, independent operators or notorious terrorists, while vast majority of metahumans live as normal a life as their mutations allow. Many of 2107's Powereds are the children and grandchildren of War veterans from both sides. The most common gene therapies used to create Powered warriors built new, dominant genetic structures in the recipients. These mutations are passed down from mother to daughter, from father to son. By changing its genes to fight more effectively, humanity has forever altered its evolution.

As gene-tech advanced, civilian genetic alteration became increasingly common. While genetically altered supersoldiers dominate the battlefield, and display amazing, inhuman powers, even the ordinary citizens of the future are genetically different from 21st century mankind. Many of the ordinary men and women of the future- the teachers, the stockbrokers, the school kids and Enclave block-moms, the wage-slaves and porn stars, the street scum and the swing voters- possess genetic gifts which straddle the line between baseline *homo sapiens* and Powered.

Each future human being is a species of one- a custom built human being designed to survive the rigors of a segregated planet.

The Powered Hero Basic Class

"He's a Proteus product. There's no telling what you're seeing when you look at a human being these days."

- *John Maddox Roberts, The Enigma Variations*

The Powered Hero Basic Class is an alternative to traditional attribute based Basic Classes, and is a unique character option available in the Otherverse America (and Psi-Watch) campaign settings. Powered Heroes are the products of cutting edge genetic alteration and nano-surgery, designed to build more capable soldiers. Many Powered Heroes are the children and grandchildren of War-era supersoldiers, who grew up among ordinary, fully human children, but grew knowing that their mothers used their superhuman strength and regeneration factor to survive clinic defense riots, or whose father wore a skull-faced unit patch and saved babies with a OICW-6 in his hands.

Powered Heroes grow more common, and more impressive with each succeeding generation. Many of 2107's Powered Heroes have a metahuman heritage going back at least a generation, and even inexperienced Powered Heroes are often far more powerful then their genetically enhanced parents, blending the physical gifts of both their post-human parents. Other Powered Heroes are first generation enhanciles, who signed on with APEX, the Lifer or Choicer military or with a megacorp in exchange for the genetic alterations necessary to make them more than human.

Powered Heroes differentiate themselves through talent trees, like the other Base Classes. However, for Powered Heroes, their various talent trees represent various genetic legacies; for some Powered Heroes, their abilities can be traced back to early 21st Century attempts to understand and master the Lifechain. For others, their chosen talent trees might represent the purchase and implantation of cloned RNA from a War-Era energy manipulator or super-speedster. For others, their genetic heritage is acquired the usual way, passed down from their parents that the moment sperm met egg.

Powered Heroes often multiclass with ability-based Basic Hero classes to increase their combat effectiveness. Which Basic Class is the best multiclassing choice for a Powered Hero is based mostly upon which ability score their Ability Push talent is keyed to, and what combat role they wish to take. Many Powered Heroes use the "Basic-Plus", (such as Tough Plus) feats from the D20 Future rules to quickly master another Basic class' unique talents with a minimal level investment

Entry Restrictions: The genetic therapies used to build Powered Heroes can only be safely applied to humans and nearly human species. In addition to pure strain humans, only Panacean humans, Half-Grey any of the "Patriot" mutates described in Psi-Watch, members of the Culture, Half-Elves and Half-Orcs (if they exist in your campaign) and other nearly human species can become Powered Heroes.

Undead creatures cannot become Powered Heroes, though if a Powered Hero dies and returns to existence as undead, he or she retains all class abilities. Neverborn cannot become Powered Heroes.

Class Information
The following information pertains to the Powered Hero Basic Class.

Hit Die
The Powered Hero gains d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Powered Heroes are tough and durable, and many can survive small caliber gunshot wounds, though they'll definitely feel the shot the next morning. A first level Powered Hero receives 8 HP + his or her CON modifier.

Action Points
The Powered Hero gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Powered Hero's class skills are as follows.

Balance (DEX), Climb (STR), Hide (DEX), Intimidate (CHA), Jump (STR), Knowledge (history, popular culture, streetwise, tactics, theology & philosophy) (INT), Listen (WIS), Move Silently (DEX), Pilot (DEX), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Spot (WIS), Tumble (DEX)

Skill Points at First Level: (3 + INT Modifier) x4
Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + INT Modifier

Table: The Powered Hero Basic Class

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+1	+0	+0	Genetic Enhancement Package, Ability Push, Talent	+0	+1
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+0	Bonus Feat	+1	+1
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+1	Talent	+1	+1
4th	+4	+2	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+1	+2
5th	+5	+3	+1	+1	Talent	+2	+2
6th	+6/+1	+3	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+2
7th	+7/+2	+3	+2	+2	Talent	+2	+3
8th	+8/+3	+4	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+3
9th	+9/+4	+4	+3	+3	Talent	+3	+3
10th	+10/+5	+5	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+4

Starting Feat: In addition to the two feats all human characters get at 1st level, a Powered Hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

Bonus Feats: At every even-numbered class level, the Powered Hero receives a bonus feat, which must be chosen from the following list.

Acrobatic, Aircraft Operation, Armor Proficiency (any), Brawl, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Far Shot, Frightful Presence, Great Fortitude, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Run

Instead of a conventional feat, the Powered Hero may substitute any Psionic Precursor Feat (described in Psi-Watch) for which he meets the requirements.

A Powered Hero with levels in any ability based basic class may select the associated "Hero Plus" feats from the *D20 Future Core Rulebook*, such as Strong Plus or Smart Plus as a class-based bonus feat.

Ability Push (EX): The Powered Hero Basic Class is not tied to any particular attribute, and metahumans with a wide selection of attributes can excel in this class. Once per day, a first level Powered Hero can focus their willpower, using intense concentration to briefly enhance their already superhuman metabolism or fundamentally alter their post-human psychology.

Using their Ability Push is a full round action which provokes attacks of opportunity. If the Powered Hero suffers damage when attempting to activate the Ability Push, the daily use is wasted without effect. The Powered Hero's Ability Push provides with a metahuman with a +2 inherent bonus to their highest ability score, which lasts for one hour. This bonus stacks with other temporary bonuses to ability scores, such as a Frontliner's Psycho-Feedback ability, spells and similar effects.

If a first level Powered Hero has two or more ability scores that are equally high, he selects which ability is enhanced by Ability Push. Once chosen, this selection cannot be changed.

Genetic Enhancement Package (EX): All Powered Heroes are imbued with a well chosen suite of 'over-the-counter' genemods, increasing their metabolism to peak-human levels and making the Powered fitter, more robust, and slightly more attractive than an unmodified human.

The Powered Hero receives the following civilian Genemods: AgeWell, Cornucopia, Freshen, and Geno-receptor. The Powered Hero becomes vulnerable to any Genefeat (such as Metabolism Burn), which specifically exploits those genemods. The major in-game effect of these genemods is that the Powered requires roughly half the food of an unmodified human of similar build, and lives significantly longer. It is also much easier for the Powered Hero to undergo additional genetic enhancement than it would be for a normal human.

All Powered Heroes gain the Psionic Subtype, and may freely select from Psionic Precursors and Psionic feats, described in the Psi-Watch campaign setting.

Talents: At every odd-numbered class level, the Powered Hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some talents have a set order that must be followed, while others provide a list to choose from. As long as the hero qualifies, you can select freely from any and all talent trees. No talent can be selected more than one unless expressly indicated.

Beginning Talents: A first level Powered Hero can choose from: Honey Trap I, Flyer I, Peak Human I, Reflex I, Regenerator I, Shooter-Type I, Stealth-Type I, Tracer I, Warbody I

Which attribute the Powered Hero's Ability Push is keyed to affects which Talents the Powered Hero may select. A Powered Hero with a STR or CON keyed Ability Push will have the widest selection of Talents to choose from.

Exploitable Weaknesses

All Powered Heroes are built along predictable lines, and have similar genetic characteristics, which mean that for all their superhuman durability, Powered Heroes are especially vulnerable to biological warfare. Predatory genefeats can lay a Powered Hero or military-grade Combat Type low easier than a sniper's bullet.

Meanwhile, Lifechained metahumans are especially vulnerable to higher-order Lifechains; with the right (or wrong) mix of Lifechained feats, a Lifechained player character might not be able to raise a hand against a Lifechained adversary, and might not even be able to **see** the adversary in the first place. Full conversion cyborgs have their own problems, both psychological and electronic, and can be hacked like any other computer system. For every path to power and every post-human weapon system, there is a countermeasure, as all the downed Combat Types buried at Arlington can attest.

Current APEX tactical doctrine calls for diverse units, usually a mix of psions, Combat Types, Powered Heroes, cyborgs, Lifechains and highly trained but unmodified humans. The logic behind these mixed squad hopes that even if the majority of the squad is incapacitated by some countermeasure, **someone** within the unit should be able to continue the fight. Most 22nd Century militaries follow APEX's lead, making complex, multifaceted squads a reality of near-future urban warfare.

Flyer Talent Tree

Antigravity organelles hidden in the Powered Hero's chest and at the base of his spine allow the metahuman to defy gravity. Powered Heroes who advance along this feat tree gain ever-increasing levels of airborne agility and can hold their own in a casual dogfight against enemy Shell suits.

Flyer I: You gain a natural Flight Speed of 30 ft (average maneuverability). If you already have a natural flight speed, it is increased by +10 ft for each talent you select from the Flier Tree.

Flyer II: Your flight speed increases to 60 ft (good maneuverability).
Prerequistes: Flyer I

Flyer III: Your flight speed increases to 90 ft (perfect maneuverability).
Prerequistes: Flyer II, Flyer I

Honey Trap Talent Tree (short)

Honey Trap Powered Heroes are designed for seduction and infiltration, not front line combat ability. These attractive Powered Heroes are trained in espionage, psychology and manipulation, and their bodies are genetically hard-wired to use sex as a weapon.

Honey Trap I: The Powered Hero's body secretes a natural hormone with mild euphoric and disassociate properties. A touch, kiss or caress from the Powered Hero can leave targets vulnerable to the Powered influence.

If the Powered Hero can make skin-to-skin contact with a sentient humanoid target, the Powered Hero receives a +4 enhancement bonus on CHA-based skill checks (except for Intimidate) made against that target within the next minute.
Prerequistes: CHA keyed Ability Push only

Honey Trap II: The bonus provided by the Powered Hero's Honey Trap I talent remains in effect for one hour after the contact. If the Powerered Hero touches the target again while the initial bonus is active, the extra dose of psychotropic chemicals increases the bonus to +8 for the duration of the effect.
Prerequistes: Honey Trap I

Peak Human Talent Tree

Powered Heroes who specialize in this talent tree refine their Ability Push talent to incredible levels. The Powered Hero may lack obvious, flashy superhuman abilities, but their enhanced attributes make them capable of amazing feats.

Peak Human I: The Powered Hero may use his

Ability Push talent twice per day at first level, plus an additional time per day per every five total character levels. When using his Ability Push talent, the Powered Hero's keyed attribute receives a +4 enhancement bonus.

Peak Human II: The bonus provided by the Ability Push talent increases to +6 for the duration of the effect.
Prerequistes: Peak Human I

Peak Human III: The bonus provided by the Ability Push talent increases to +8 for the duration of the effect. When using your Ability Push talent, in addition to receiving a +8 enhancement bonus to your initial ability score, you receive a +2 enhancement bonus to your next highest ability score for the duration of the effect. If you have multiple ability scores at the same level, you choose which ability score is affected by your improved Ability Push. Once chosen, this selection cannot be changed.
Prerequistes: Peak Human II, Peak Human I

Reflex Talent Tree

The Reflex Tree emphasizes raw speed and agility, and uses modification to the body's fast twitch muscle groups and spinal column to push reaction time and agility into the near-superhuman realm.

Reflex Tree metahumans are found among every faction, and these Powered Heroes are often highly skilled martial artists and melee combat experts. These fast moving Powereds are common among the Choicer military, as that pseudo-nation favors quick, agile and relatively lightly armored troops as opposed to the bulkier and earth-bound soldiers of the Lifer Army of God.

Reflex I: The Powered Hero receives a +4 bonus on Jump and Tumble checks as well as a +2 bonus on Initiative checks thanks to their gene-mods. The Powered Hero's jumping distance is no longer limited by his height.
Prerequisites: DEX keyed Ability Push only

Reflex II: The Powered Hero no longer needs to make a running start when making a long jump. If the Powered Hero gets at least a 20 ft running start, he receives a +10 bonus on the Jump check.

The Powered Hero may add ¼ his ranks in Jump (rounded down) as a competence bonus on REF Saving throws, as he instinctively seems to leap out of danger's path.
Prerequistes: Reflex I

Reflex III: The Powered Hero's jumping distance does not count against his total movement rate for the round. The Powered Hero can make one jump attempt per round as a free action, enabling the Powered to cover incredible distances through a combination of conventional sprinting and bounding.
Prerequistes: Reflex II, Reflex I

Regenerator Talent Tree

Powered Heroes with this talent tree are incredibly durable and nearly impossible to kill. They can recover in minute from beatings that would cripple an ordinary human, and can survive short bursts of automatic weapons fire. Powered Heroes with high levels of this talent can even regrow severed limbs and automatically repair damage to their central nervous system.

Regenerator I: You automatically stabilize when reduced to 0 HP or fewer. You do not automatically lose additional HP each round unless injured further. You are especially robust, gaining a number of hit points equal to your Powered Hero level immediately as you select this talent. There after, you gain +1 hit point for each level of Powered Hero you obtain.
Prerequistes: CON keyed Ability Push

Regenerator II: You gain Fast Healing 1, thanks to your phenomenal metabolism and incredible natural healing gifts.
Prerequistes: Regenerator I

Regenerator III: Once per day, you can instantly recover a number of Hit Points equal to your total character level. This talent cannot increase your HP beyond your full normal total. Using this ability is a move equivalent action.

Prerequistes: Regenerator II, Regenerator I.

Regenerator IV: You gain Regeneration as an Extraordinary ability. Physical damage inflicted upon you heals instantly. Energy and acid damage affects you normally.
Prerequistes: Regenerator III, Regenerator II, Regenerator I

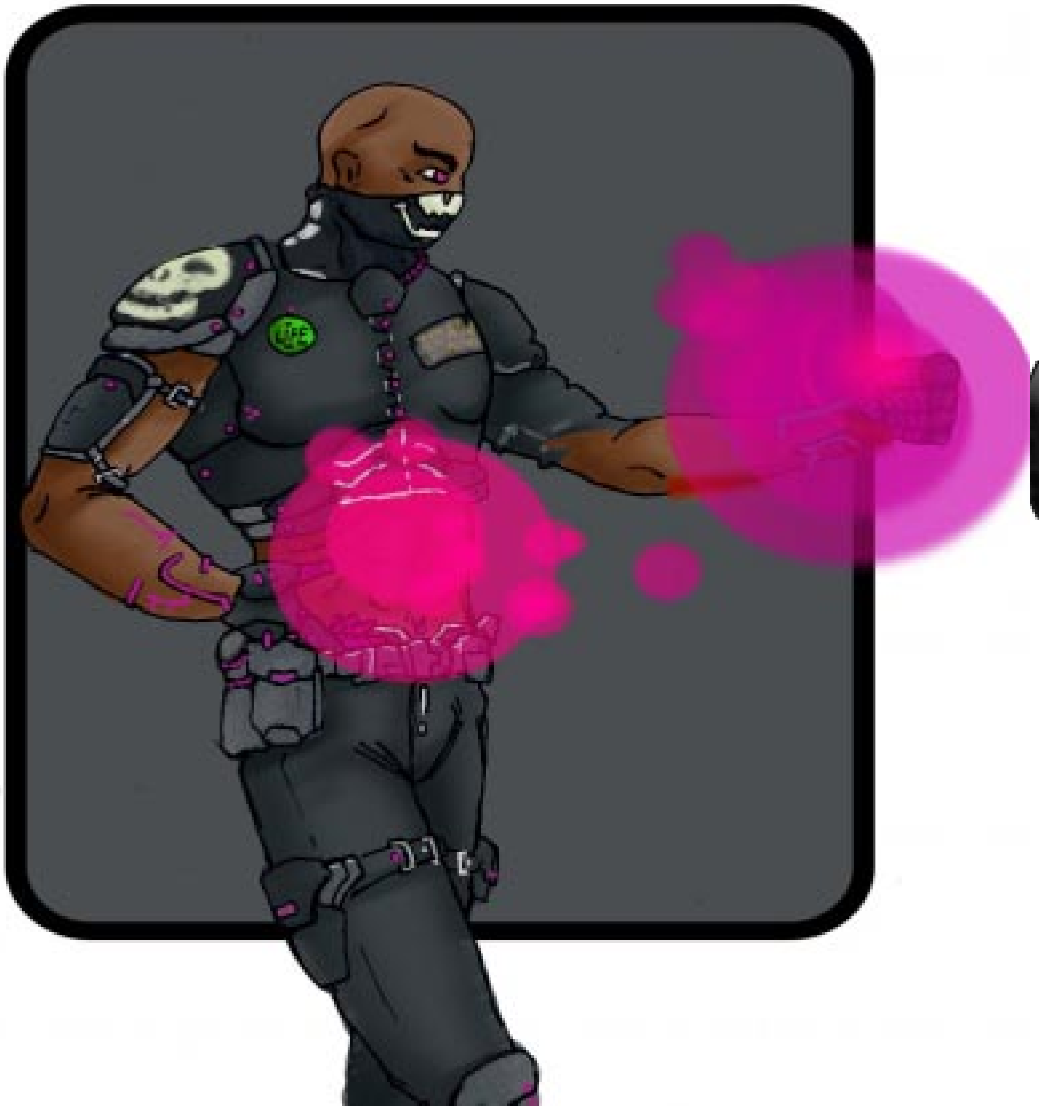
Shooter-Type Talent Tree (short)

The Powered Hero can generate deadly energy discharge and release them from projection organs built into their hands or forearms. These natural energy bolts are as deadly as a pistol, and unlike a soldier using conventional weapons, the Powered Hero can't be disarmed and won't set off weapon detectors.

Shooter-Type I: The Powered Hero can naturally generate a blast of energy which is about as deadly as a modern handgun. This ability is usable at will as an attack action; the Powered Hero is always considered armed and proficient when firing his natural energy weapon.

The Powered can generate a blast which inflicts 1d6 points of force damage, and has a range increment of 25 ft. This natural energy weapon may be used in conjunction with ranged combat feats. The Powered Hero can use this ability at will, without needing to reload or rest. It would take hours of constant fire to tire a Powered Hero using this ability.

If the Powered Hero has or later acquires another natural energy attack, such as a breath



weapon, or the Combat Type's Genomic Weapon ability (described in Psi-Watch), that natural weapon inflicts an additional 1d6 points of force damage when used. Effectively, the Powered Hero uses the two talents simultaneously from that point on.

Shooter-Type II: The Powered Hero's natural energy blast damage increases to 2d6 points of force damage.
Prerequistes: Shooter-Type I

Stealth-Type Talent Tree (short)

Stealth-Type Powered Heroes are designed for infiltration and are custom-grown, without the inherent weaknesses common to other metahumans. Genetically and physically, they are indistinguishable from unmodified humans, a fact that allows these high-concealment metahumans to go where more obvious metahumans can't.

Stealth Type I: The Powered Hero does not register as possessing the Psionic subtype when viewed by creatures (such as members of the Challenger subspecies) or objects (such as a gene scanner) which detect psionics. If the Powered Hero is, or if he becomes, Lifechained, his Lifechained nature is hidden from other Lifespawn, and he cannot be automatically detected by other Lifespawn.

Stealth-Type II: The Powered Hero cannot be affected by predatory Lifechain abilities nor can he be affected by predatory Genefeats. The Powered Hero receives a +4 bonus on all Bluff and Disguise checks made to pass for a normal, unmodified human.
Prerequistes: Stealth-Type I, any other Powered Hero talent

Tracer Talent Tree

The Tracer Talent tree is designed to enhance a Powered Hero's senses to superhuman levels by using animal alleles and artificially implanted neural connections. Powered Heroes with the Tracer talent tree have noses keen as a bloodhound, and eyes as sharp as an eagle's.

Tracer Tree metahumans are common among the world's police forces and militaries, and often serve as elite bodyguards, bomb sniffers or drug-interdiction experts.

Tracer I: The Powered Hero receives a +4 bonus on all Spot and Listen checks, as well as all Survival checks made to follow a target's trail.
Prerequisite: WIS keyed Ability Push only

Tracer II: The Powered Hero gains *lowlight vision* and *darkvision* with a 60 ft range.
Prerequisite: Tracer I

Tracer III: The Powered Hero gains the *Scent* special quality, and can recognize familiar odors as easily as ordinary humans recognize familiar sights. The Powered Hero can use the Survival skill to track a target by scent alone.
Prerequisite: Tracer II, Tracer I

Warbody Talent Tree

The Warbody Talent Tree focuses on increasing a Powered Hero's frontline combat durability and physical strength, regardless of how these mutations affect the Powered's appearance. Warbodies are obviously inhuman, with massive frames covered in muscle and natural armor, and their faces are often alien or vaguely animalistic. Many Warbodies are products of advanced biotechnology and resemble combat cyborgs more than any natural life form.

The Warbody Talent Tree is especially common among Lifer metahumans, who tend to favor overwhelming force, and are comfortable with levels of physical mutation unheard of among Choicer Powereds. For a dedicated Lifer supersoldier, being ugly is a small price to pay for becoming a living weapon.

Warbody I: The Powered Hero becomes size: Large. The Powered Hero receives a +4 size bonus on Grapple checks, but suffers a -4 size penalty on Hide checks, and a -1 size penalty to Defense. The Powered Hero's lifting and carrying limits are double those of a normal-sized human, and he or she can wield larger weapons than a medium sized counterpart.
Prerequistes: STR or CON keyed Ability Push only.

Warbody II: The Powered Hero’s dense, obviously armored hide provides him with a +3 natural armor bonus to Defense.
Prerequistes: Warbody I

Warbody III: The Powered Hero becomes size: Huge. The Powered hero receives an additional +4 size bonus on Grapple checks, but suffers an additional -4 size penalty on Hide checks, and an additional -1 size penalty to Defense. The Powered Hero’s lifting and carrying limits are triple those of a normal-sized human, and he or she can wield significantly weapons than a medium sized counterpart.
Prerequistes: Warbody II, Warbody I

Variant Rule: Early Glory

The heroes of Otherverse America often display extraordinary talents at a relatively young age. Through sheer will power, these heroic characters can briefly manifest the talents and post-human transformations that will become common towards the end of their heroic careers while still young and inexperienced.

By spending an action point and sacrificing XP, an Otherverse America character may briefly manifest the higher level class abilities they have yet to earn. A character must have at least two levels in a particular class (either a Basic or Advanced class) to briefly manifest a higher level ability from that class.

The character sacrifices XP equal to 100 x the level of the unique class ability manifested. Once manifested, the class ability remains in effect for a single round, if the ability's effect is normally measured in rounds. If the ability has a duration of one round or less, its duration is unchanged when activated in this manner. Instant abilities take effect normally. Manifesting a class ability is a free action, though using the manifested class ability may be a standard, move-equivalent or other action. You may manifest an ability even on another's character's turn, or in reaction to an attack. You cannot use this ability if flat-footed.

If the class ability you manifest incorporates a physical transformation, such as the Closer's Rescue Fire class ability, you are exhausted for the duration of the encounter as soon as the transformation ends.

You cannot manifest a class-based bonus feat when using this ability. You could technically imitate a class ability that provides a constant bonus to some skills or attack rolls (such as the Neo-Witch Midwife's Feminist Medicine class ability), though it's usually more efficient just to spend an action point to enhance the check through use of an action die. You may manifest a Basic class' talent, provided you meet the prerequistes of the ability to be manifested.

Genetic Therapies

"How do you know I can't breathe water? You stay cut off from the City. You don't know what we do, what we have. We've cured cancer. Most women can abort unwanted pregnancies just by thinking about it. We live to one hundred without trying.
How do you know I can't kill you by staring hard?"

- *Spider Jerusalem, Warren Ellis' Transmetropolitian*

Genetic therapies *(and soft tech bionics, described fully in Department 7 Tech Update: Cybernetics)* first come into common use during the early years of Progress Level 6, though some experimental treatments are working their way through the FDA approval process in the latter days of Progress Level 5. By progress level seven, commercial gene-mods are an accepted fact of life; it's harder to find a completely unmodified human than it is to find a genetically altered one.

Unless otherwise noted, all genetic modifications are considered to be dominant alleles, and will be passed on to the patient's offspring.

These genetic modifications can be easily (and relatively safely) applied to a child in utero, using specially designed retroviruses and drug-combinations to alter the child's DNA while it is at its most adaptive. Modified children can use their special gifts from birth, and many never even realize they've been modified. Being a more perfect creation is these children's birthright.

Altering a person's genome after birth is a more complex and potentially painful process. After a series of retroviral injections or nano-surgery, the patient's body undergoes system wide genetic changes. The transformation is often uncomfortable; fevers and night sweats as the patient's immune system tries to fight off the specially tailored infection, aches and muscle cramps if new tissue is being produced, or if the body is radically reshaping itself, and similar ailments.

If the patient's immune system is suppressed to ensure the gene-mods are accepted by the bloodstream, opportunistic infections become a major concern. Depending on the severity of the genetic changes desired, symptoms can range from an annoying flu like malaise, to a cellular breakdown that resembles end-stage AIDS.

If the modifications are especially severe, many gene-therapists will induce a coma to increase the patient's chances for survival when making major genetic changes. Patients are usually put into a coma when undergoing radical genetic reconstruction, such as altering the patient's sex or implanting metahuman abilities. At the other end of the spectrum, minor gene-twists can be preformed as an outpatient procedure. Patients can visit a gene-kiosk to perfect their physique or eliminate body odor or other everyday biological annoyances.

The following rules replace the rules for genetic alteration in chapter five of the *D20 Future Core Rulebook*.

Modifying a patient's genome is a lengthy and potentially risky process. Once a tailored viral-load is injected into the patient, the patient must begin making a series of FORT saves, once per day, as his immune system attempts to come to terms with the modifications.

The patient must continue to make FORT saves until he achieves a specific number of successes linked to the genetic modification being attempted, at which point he permanently gains the new ability. Each time the patient fails a save, he suffers 1d2 points of temporary CON damage.

During the genetic alteration process, the patient's new ability remains latent, and the patient receives no benefit from the mutation. During the alteration process, the patient is considered *fatigued.* If the patient is fails two consecutive FORT saves during the alteration process, he is considered *sickened,* and remains so for the duration of the alteration process.

If the patient is under long-term medical care, he can use the physician's Treat Injury check result in place of his FORT save if it is higher, exactly as if the physician was attempting to treat a disease.

Beginning in PL 7, multiple genetic modifications (such as multiple lifestyle mods, ability score mods or extraordinary abilities) may be combined into one treatment. Treat such large-scale alterations as if the patient were making FORT saves to gain a single new Supernatural special quality.

Table: Genemod Risks and Costs

Type of Special Quality	Progress Level	FORT Save DC	Number of Successes	Purchase DC for modification	Restriction
Lifestyle Genemods	PL 6	DC 12	5	Usually 12-18	Usually none
+1 inherent bonus to any ability score	PL 6	DC 15	10	18	–
+2 inherent bonus to any ability score	PL 7	DC 20	15	22	Licensed (+1)
Any Extraordinary Ability (EX)	PL 6	DC 20	15	26	Restricted (+2)
Any Supernatural Ability (SU)	PL 7	DC 20	25	28	Military (+3)
Any Spell-like Ability (SP)	PL 8	DC 20	50	30	Military (+3)

Altering the Unborn (Early PL 6)

Prenatal genetic modification is far easier than altering the genetic code of an adult. Reduce the Purchase DC of any genetic modifications preformed on a fetus by two. A gestating fetus does not need to make FORT saves to survive the genetic alteration process; the alterations become active as soon as the creature is born.

Genepush (PL 6)

Accelerated genetic treatments are possible, which reduce the patient's period of incapacitation, but they put the patient's long-term health at risk. Genepush therapies have the same Purchase DC as standard genetic treatments, their restriction is increased by one step, and are always at least Licensed (+1) genemods.

If the patient's daily FORT save is successful, the patient can attempt additional FORT saves each hour, in an attempt to rapidly 'push through' the pain of genetic alteration. Each hour the patient can attempt an additional FORT save, the base DC of which increases by +2. The patient can continue making FORT saves until the genetic therapy is complete, or until he fails a FORT save and suffers CON damage. Once a save is failed, the patient must make all additional necessary FORT saves in the usual time frame.

Temp Mods (PL 7)

Temp Mods are short-lived genetic alterations, which allow gene-bending enthusiasts to sample a few days of life in an altered body, or to experience short-lived but dramatic mutations. Temp Mods are in wide use among military and special forces groups, allowing soldiers to customize themselves genetically before beginning a mission.

Temp Mods are initiated with the application of a short-term genetherapy. Once injected, the temporary genemod takes affect within 1d6 minutes of injection. During the incubation period, the ability is latent, and the patient is considered *nauseated.*

Temp Mods remain in effect for 6 to 24 hours once they become active, and the duration of the genetic alteration determines the cost of the Temp Mod.

- Temp Mods with a 6 hour duration or less have a purchase DC equal to a standard genetic alteration –2, and have the same Restriction, if any.
- Temp Mods with a 12 hour duration have a purchase DC equal to a standard genetic alteration, and have the same Restriction, if any.
- Temp Mods with a 24 hour duration have a purchase DC equal to a standard genetic alteration +2, and always have their restriction rating increased by +1, and are always at least Licensed chemicals (+1 purchase DC).

At the end of the active period, the patient reverts to his normal state, suffering 1d6 points of temporary CON damage. The patient can attempt a DC 15 FORT save to halve the damage.

A patient can safely accept a number of Temp Mods per month equal to one plus his CON modifier. Thus, a character with a 13 CON (+1 modifier) would be able to safely within 2 Temp Mods in any given month, while a character with a CON of 10 (+0 modifier) could only safely accept one temp mod. If the character exceeds this limit, any time he suffers ability score damage from the temp mod, he must make a second FORT save (DC 12 + the number of Temp Mods attempted that month) or suffer permanent CON drain instead.

GeneSafe (PL 6)

This revolutionary nano-load is injected into a patient before beginning gene therapy, and is responsible for taking genetic engineering off of the battlefield and into shopping mall cosmetic boutiques. Used properly, GeneSafe allows a patient to undergo small-scale genetic reorganization without risk.

A dose of GeneSafe acts as five automatic successful FORT saves, shortening the recovery process and making ‘life style’ genemods as common as tattoos and making more extensive genetic modifications much less risky.

The patient can only benefit from a single injection of GeneSafe per genetic alteration.

Stabilizer Drugs (PL 6)

If a patient’s genetics are out of control, and the patient is at risk of death from cellular collapse and Constitution damage, the physician can elect to abort the mutation, injecting a powerful nano-toxin that unravels the mutation. Injecting a dose of genetic stabilizer immediately ends any incomplete genetic alteration, so that the patient will not have to risk any additional FORT saves during a failed treatment regimen.

Genetic stabilization drugs are available in liquid, pill and drug-patch form.

Building Your Own Affiliations

The affiliations and famous units described in this book are far from an exhaustive list. Instead, the units and factions described are a representative sample of the kinds of organizations to be found in Otherverse America. The gamemaster is encouraged to design her own affiliations for her own campaigns.

Affiliations should be roughly as powerful as a feat, but have slightly higher requirements. Since a character can gain an affiliation (and its tactical benefits) at any time, without gaining a level or spending a feat slot, the character has to meet some pretty high standards to get the affiliation. Only a few affiliations are available to first level characters, and their benefits are relatively minor. Membership in an elite organization requires a well thought-out character concept.

Generally, an affiliation provides a minor ability that is useful to any character type, but is most useful to a particular type of hero. One affiliation may reward unarmed martial artists, another rewards diplomats and manipulators, while a third provides a concrete advantage to tech-experts. In most cases, the benefit provided is non-supernatural, non-super powered, and is a result of whatever special training membership in the elite group provides.

Table: Genetic Engineering Drugs

Object	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Genepush Therapy	-	-	Base Purchase DC +2	always at least Licensed (+1)
GeneSafe(PL 6)	Fine	Negligible	15	Licensed (+1)
Genetic Stabilizer (PL 6)	Fine	Negligible	12	Licensed (+1)

New Affiliation: Nexii Genetic Clinics

Type: Publicly traded international corporation
Incorporation Year: 2033
Corporate Motto: New, better, and safer.

Nexii Genetic Clinics are a well-run chain of commercial genetic engineering boutiques, who perform innovative genetic alterations and reproductive medical care in an outpatient setting. There are nearly 200 Nexii clinics across America, each owned by a reputable genetic physician who is only allowed to use the Nexii brand name after extensive franchise training and safety inspections. The first and largest Nexii clinic is located in Boulder, Colorado, and services an exclusive clientele.

Nexii uses proprietary, unconventional methods of genetic resequencing, allowing their staff to perform the minor genetic alterations that are their bread and butter safer and less painfully. Nexii’s methods are efficient enough for the genetic engineering giant to have won a defense contract, attending to the needs of genetically enhanced APEX super soldiers.

Affiliation Prerequisites: Knowledge: earth & life sciences 9 ranks, Treat Injury 4 ranks, Medical Expert, Educated

Affiliation Benefit: When performing any genetic alteration, your patients receive two free successes on the FORT saves necessary to survive the process, which stacks with the free successes provided by Gene-safe, if that chemical is used.

Gene Therapies vs Soft Tech Bionics

There is little functional difference between soft tech bionics and civilian gene therapies. Soft tech cybernetics are biological analogues for proven military hardware, while civilian gene therapies focus on less invasive, less combat-oriented procedures that improve the patient's quality of life, not their damage dealing capability. Soft tech bionics tend to be far more expensive and more heavily regulated.

Commercial genemods have are lower cost, have more subtle effects, and typically require a period of convalescence during the modification process.

Many soft tech bionics are priced beyond the reach of most individuals, even many governments. Implanting a biological computer system runs into hundred million dollar range easily, making it far more cost effective to use conventional hard-tech, despite the risk of discovery. However, riskier, and more invasive modification procedures can be used to cut costs.

If the physician treats the implantation of a soft tech bionic like implanting a supernatural or Spell-like ability (slowing the process and requiring FORT saves from the patient) the cost can be reduced.

- A Soft Tech implant treated as a Supernatural ability reduces the purchase DC by –10. Minimum Purchase DC is 16.
- A Soft Tech implant treated as a Spelllike ability reduces the purchase DC by -15. Minimum Purchase DC is 16.

Soft Tech Genetic Modifications (reprinted from Dept 7 Tech Update: Cybernetics)

At some, cybernetics will become so advanced that they can be encoded on a recipient's genetic code. Technological improvements can be passed to offspring, creating phenomenal variant species that were human, once upon a time. Genetic alteration and advanced drug therapies replace surgery and mechanical augmentation, producing the same effects. The resulting augmentations act as genetic-level super powers, usable at will by the mutant.

Soft tech augmentation increases the cost of the base cyber-implant by a factor of 1.5, and is available at one Progress Level higher than the implant is normally available at. Soft-tech augmentations do not have a Drain Rating, nor require any additional power supply or ammunition.

Bio-cyborgs can have any number of genemods, which are not easily detectable by conventional methods, making these advanced designer mutations highly sought after commodities.

Most genetically altered bio-cyborgs look completely human, but are able to grow and retract additional limbs, weapons arrays and other "cybernetic" features at will. Other bio-borgs are obvious mutants and are unable to retract their bio-cybernetics.

If a bio-borg wishes to change his type to Monstrous Humanoid, with all the benefits that such a change entails, he can do so as part of the augmentation process. He is than unable to return to a fully human form.

Characters who become Monstrous Humanoids as a result of this augmentation retain their Human skill points and feats, but gain immunity to spells that specifically target humanoids. Monstrous humanoids receive Darkvision with a 60 ft range. Monstrous humanoid bio-borgs suffer a –6 racial penalty to Disguise checks. Hit Dice and Base Attack Bonus are unchanged.

However, even bio-borgs with a completely human outer appearance are not standard *homo sapiens*. As a result of their strange, alien anatomies all Treat Injury checks made to assist a gene-modded character suffer a - 8 penalty unless the treating physician has the Xenomedic feat, as if the genetically modified character were an alien life form. Soft Tech augmentations are passed to the bio-borg's offspring; these artificial modifications are always considered dominant alleles.

In the case of weapons that require replaceable ammunition, the cyborg's body naturally produces one "clip" worth of ammo per day; when it is time to reload, the cyborg makes a FORT save at the same difficultly as the Purchase DC of additional ammunition. Success indicates the cyborg can press his body on to hurriedly produce more ammunition as a full round action. Each time the bio-borg does so, the bio-borg suffers a negative level, which cannot be removed until the cyborg rests.

Failure indicates the bio-borg cannot force his body to produce more ammunition for that weapon (or any other soft tech weapon). The bio-borg is considered *fatigued* until he rests. Cyber-implants that require an additional fuel source, (such as an implanted jet pack that only has a short flight time before needing expensive fuel) follows the same rules for replenishment.

Genetic Birthright

Since genetic therapies can be preformed in utero, players could conceivably begin the game with a wide variety of genetic superpowers and useful minor mutations. Individual game masters can handle this in a variety of ways.

1. *Allow the character to select any gene mods that suit the character concept, without 'cost'*. While this is the easiest option, it is also the most vulnerable to player abuse, and is best suited for trans-humanist or super heroic campaigns, where players have a wide variety of enhancement options and unique powers, as well as far future campaigns where genetic alteration has been an accepted science for several generations. While a few 'free' life style implants won't break a campaign, implanted genetic weapons and soft tech bionics can, so be careful what you allow.

A good rule of thumb might be to allow any gene therapies without a restriction rating to be

chosen. After all, these are the most common, socially acceptable gene mods in existence. If the character wants onboard weapons, he's going to have to buy them during char-gen or during play.

This is the default option for the Otherverse America campaign setting.

2. Allow the PCs to purchase gene-mods like they would any other starting gear. Characters can purchase pretty much any gene-mods they want during character generation, spending points of their Wealth Bonus to buy what's needed. This may not be completely logical: after all, the character's parents will pay for pre-natal gene therapies, not by the character. Of course, you can hand wave this away by suggesting the parents spent the child's inheritance on gene therapies, or expensive medical treatments in early childhood put the character and his family into debt.

3. Require a feat slot for inborn genetic alterations. The character's genetic capabilities are balanced by losing a feat slot. One 'spent' feat slot allows the character to select 4 – 6 lifestyle genemods, a +2 inherent bonus on any one ability score, or a single extraordinary ability (subject to GM approval). If the character wants additional or more invasive genemods, he will have to acquire them in game.

This is a metagame solution to the balance issue, and works best in campaigns where gene treatments are just coming into wide use. Due to the relative power of **Regeneration (EX),** you may wish to specifically disallow characters from selecting it as a genemod, or require a greater sacrifice to balance it out.

Homogenesis Parenting (PL 6)

Homogenesis Parenting is a commercially available gene-cutting technique designed to allow homosexual couples, of either gender, to bear children that are genetically 'theirs.'

Random selections of genetic traits are chosen from each partner, and after careful screening for sex linked genetic defects and anomalies, one partner's genetic contribution has its chromosomal gender changed. Effectively, a sperm cell becomes an egg cell, or vice versa. The partner's gametes are combined and either implanted in a human surrogate or grown in an exo-womb.

Despite expected opposition from conservative groups, Homogenesis is a common, affordable and popular outpatient procedure among 21st century gay and lesbian couples. Many adoption advocacy groups also criticize Homogenesis, preferring childless couples adopt rather than turning to expensive and 'unnatural' means to conceive.

Children produced by Homogenesis are virtually identical to offspring produced by heterosexual reproduction. Due to the complicated gene-cutting involved in changing a gamete's gender, Homogenesis children are at slightly greater risk for sex-linked genetic disorders, including Downs Syndrome and hemophilia. Regular prenatal scans and genetic screenings are common. As in the case of most modern fertility procedures, multiple births are more common among Homogenesis children than their hetero-born counterparts.

Homogenesis children resemble their parents, as do hetero-born children. Genetic alterations, soft tech bionics, mutations and genetic deformities can be passed to Homogenesis children, just as they can to ordinary newborns.

Game Rule Information

Homogenesis procedures and the related prenatal care has a base Purchase DC equal to 10 + the attending physician's ranks in either Treat Injury or Craft: pharmaceuticals.

Children produced via Homogenesis are no different in game terms from a hetrero-born member of the same species.

Other Wombs

Future humanity is not born the same way modern day humans are. A variety of advanced reproductive techniques ensure that the origin of a futuristic PC can be unique and interesting even before their conception. The new reproductive technology described here has produced a handful of intriguing new variant human species.

Though these variant humans are identical to conventional humans in game terms, they might suffer social stigma, or have quirks related to their birth or unusual parentage. Add in the panoply alien-human hybrids, genetically engineered supersoldiers, extraterrestrial immigrants, androids and full conversion ‘borgs common to the Otherverse and being ‘just a human’ becomes an endlessly exotic player option again.

- Birthbreed: This genetic alteration allows for faster, easier and less inconvenient pregnancies, fundamentally changing how homo sapiens reproduces. This gene-mod is extremely common among Lifer women; women with this genemod outnumber those without in the Enclaves.

- Genetic Randomization: Children produced with this cyber system might resemble neither parent, bear an assortment of original new genetic traits, or might be the product of a designer genome ‘painted’ like fine art. Easy to use, limited-utility genetic re-sequencing equipment is priced within the reach of the upper middle class, allowing parents to chose their child’s genetic heritage. These programs are menu-driven and intuitive, performing all the calculations necessary so that even a lay person can sculpt a viable genome.

- Exo-womb: A child raised in an artificial external womb, or gestated in a robotic reproductive surrogate. The moderate arm of the Lifer pseudo-nation maintains massive exo-womb facilities, which it offers to the public at little or no cost, as an alternative to abortion. Some “Coldborn” children are decanted after years in fetal cryo-stasis.

- Hivelove: Produced by a single female and multiple male genetic donors, who each contribute a well-chosen fragment of genetic material. Many young Choicer mothers ingest a temp-mod version of this gene-twist before the Beltane Fires, in hopes of producing genetically enhanced offspring.

- Homogenesis: Homogenesis children are the products of homosexual couples, whose genetic material is combined artificially to produce offspring. Homogenesis parenting was first introduced during the late 2010s, one of the many examples of Covenant-inspired technology offered to America’s gay community in exchange for political support.

- Marybirth: Effectively a cloned offspring produced by a mother, without male involvement. A relatively new genemod, Marybirth is still more of a curiosity than a social movement, but is growing in popularity among some Choicer factions.

Cybernetic Implant: Exowomb (PL 7)

Human reproduction changed forever with the introduction of this implant. Thanks to the advanced nano-factories replacing the uterus and ovaries, cyborgs with this implant become egg-laying mammals.

At virtually any point during the first trimester of pregnancy, a woman with this cyber implant can lay an nanotech egg, containing the gestating fetus and an artificial wombtank. Once removed from the woman's body, the exowomb can carry the pregnancy to term without additional human involvement.

The exowomb can integrate itself to the home's power supply, synthezing the necessary nutrients and hormones from the air, or link itself to a domestic bio-replicator. Fetal growth can be accelerated, bringing the pregnancy to term within 2 weeks, or can be extended as long as two years, giving the woman additional time to prepare to become a mother. Longer term storage requires access to an external life support system.

Exowomb born children are physiologically identical to their vaginally born counterparts, but child psychologist and pediatricians are torn on the psychological impact of such a sterile and artificial birth.

If a woman chooses not to continue a pregnancy, the exowomb nanofactory can abort a fetus safely and painlessly at any time up to the third trimester of an internal pregnancy.

Though it possesses the capability to perform 3rd trimester abortions, the implant will not do except in the most extreme situations, for safety. Depending on jurisdiction, an exowomb may or may not allow a mother to terminate an external pregnancy prior to hatching, though all exowombs have this capability.

Exowomb technology is a gaining in popularity among Choicer women. The Nicellos family is as fertile as any Lifer enclave; all of current High Priestesses Lady Nicellos's six offspring are the products of the Beltane celebrations, and are considered to be fathered by the gods.

Lady Nicellos has earned some controversy for choosing to bring her children to term in external wombs, rather than via natural childbirth, though not enough to hinder her rise to power. Nicellos is considered a trendsetter and champion for Choicer and Covenant women who want to take advantage of this revolutionary reproductive technology.

Drain: 2
Type: Internal
Hardness/Hit Points: 5/10
Base Purchase DC: 25
Restriction: None

Coldbirth (General)

The more moderate arm of the Lifer movement maintains exo-womb faculties and long-term cyro-stasis centers, which it offers to desperate mothers in lieu of abortion's finality. These services are often free or at low cost to the parents.

Developmental psychologists debate the long term emotional results of such sterile and unconventional births, debating the damage done, (if any) to the child's psyche. What is known is that a whole generation, 'not born of woman' in the usual sense have grown up; most Coldborn children are strong and self reliant, probably as a result of their strange birth.

Prerequisite: character level first only

Benefit: Your birth was delayed, possibly by decades, thanks to fetal cryo-storage. You were brought to term in an artificial womb.

Your experiences in utero have shaped your psychology. You are incredibly self reliant and have an instinctive understanding of the 22nd Century's ultra technology.

You receive a +1 racial bonus on WILL saves against fear, as well as psionic or magical effects playing upon loneliness or self doubt.

You receive a +2 racial bonus on Sense Motive and Treat Injury check as well as either Computer Use or Craft (any) checks.

New Afiliation: RESCUE International
Official Designation: None
Formation Year: Mid 1980s
Motto: "Life is Always Precious"

RESCUE International is the largest and most influential moderate Lifer organization on the planet, and one of the oldest voices within the movement. During RESCUE's early days, it earned a reputation as an innovative group of Lifer crusaders, using street demonstrations, legal pressure and well designed ad campaigns to plague the pro-choice movement. Over the decades, RESCUE International transformed itself from a lobbing and activist group into a major voice in international politics and humanitarian concerns, its members convinced they had a calling to bring their commitment to protecting innocent life to the logical conclusion. By the mid 2020s, RESCUE International had become active in anti-genocide, anti-death penalty and human rights campaigning, not just anti-abortion protests.

RESCUE International has become a trusted diplomatic and humanitarian organization, and is a trusted mediator and peacekeeping organization across the world. RESCUE International works closely with the International Society of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and similar groups. During the War, RESCUE International took upon itself the responsibility for protecting and assisting civilians trapped in war zones, ensuring prisoners were treated in accordance with international law, as well as providing free or low cost fetal cryo-storage and exo-wombs as an alternative to abortion.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Medical Expert, Diplomacy 4 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank, either Trustworthy or Gearhead, Must have selected one of the following starting occupations: Doctor, Emergency Services, Religious, Student, Technician.

Affiliation Benefit: You are an extremely skilled diplomat and peacemaker, more than able to transform mortal enemies into fast friends. You receive a +2 insight bonus on all Diplomacy checks made against someone who has an unfriendly or worse starting attitude towards you. Additionally, you receive a +1 insight bonus on Treat Injury and Computer Use checks, as a result of your intensive high-tech training.

Cybernetic Implant: Genetic Randomizer (PL 6)

This controversial implant was initially designed to allow men who carried dangerous genetic defects to safely father children. A nanofactory in the cyborg's testes produces random gene sequences, which are mixed with the cyborg's own gametes, to produce sperm which has very little genetic resemblance to the cyborg's own DNA.

Unfortunately, while this implant may have legitimate medical applications, it has found widest acceptance among rapists who use it to hide the evidence of their crimes, and playboys who use it to skip out on child support.

Cybernetic Implant: Genetic Randomizer (PL 7)

More advanced genetic randomizers allow female cyborgs to re-organize their eggs just as a male can re-write his sperm. Today, genetic randomization is an intimate art form. Advanced g-randomizers work in conjunction with common, commercially available graphics design and creativity programs to allow a cyborg to 'handcraft' a unique, wondrous new genome just like they would a painting or a piece of music.

Safety programs within the g-randomizer prevent genetic defects, but allow a would-be cyber-parent to produce genetically superior offspring (equal to a Hivelove baby or a child with 1d4+1 well chosen gene mods) by succeeding at a DC 18 Craft: visual arts, sculpture or writing check.

Benefit: Any Investigate checks made to determine the cyborg's identity from semen traces, or made to establish paternity suffer a –10 penalty. Additionally, if the cyborg carries a genetic defect or mutation, it will not be passed on to his offspring

A child fathered in conjunction with this implant does not receive any beneficial genetic enhancements, mutations or soft tech bionics possessed by the father.

Drain: 0.5
Type: Internal
Hardness/Hit Points: -/1
Base Purchase DC: 22
Restriction: Restricted (+3)

Lifestyle Genemods

As genetic alteration becomes common, the definition of what exactly is human becomes stretched. New alleles are dumped into the gene pool, and anyone with the cash reserves can develop minor meta-human talents, customizing the body they were born with like they would a street racer. The following life style genemods are some of the most prevalent in 21st and early 22nd century America.

Many are also common in military circles; most 22nd Century soldiers have been augmented by minor (and relatively cheap) genetic enhancements rather than the more dangerous genetic therapies used to custom build Combat Types and other metahumans.

A-10tive (PL 6) (Neural)

A-10tive is the genemod of big business and corporate success, or so it's marketing claims. A-10tive induces minor structural changes in the patient's frontal and temporal lobe. A-10tive is designed to increase the patient's short-term memory, concentration and ability to perform repetitive tasks efficiently, all traits highly prized in the workforce. There is an unspoken but growing bias against white-collar workers without the A-10tive genemod. Additionally, adult injection of this genemod has shown promise in treating the early symptoms of Altimizers.

Anyone modified with A-10tive receives a +1 racial bonus on Concentration and Profession (any white collar) checks.

Agewell (PL 7)

Agewell is target marketed at the middle aged and elderly, promising a decades long golden retirement free of the aches, pains and biological annoyances that have accompanied aging for millennia. Agewell improves bone density, joint strength, cardiac and vascular health and a dozen other biological systems, vastly increasing lifespan and quality of life.

Agewell increases the length between age categories for anyone modified with the gene-twist, as shown on the table below.

Athlete Gold (PL 7)

Athlete Gold is a performance enhancing genemod banned by the International Olympic Committee, but accepted by most major American sports leagues. Athlete Gold increases a recipient's lung capacity, muscle flexibility and coordination.

Anyone modified with Athlete Gold receives a +1 racial bonus on Jump and Tumble checks, as well as FORT saves related to muscular or aerobic endurance.

Aviator (PL 6) (Neural)

The Aviator genemod increases g-force resistance by strengthening vascular tissue and improving cardio-vascular health over all, in addition to rewiring neural tissue to make three dimensional thought and movement easier. Optic tissue is similarly improved, granting phenomenal vision, all traits necessary for combat pilots.

Aviator's recipient receives a +1 racial bonus on Pilot checks as well as Spot checks.

Special: A creature capable of flight under its own power, including via spell casting, that receives this genemod has their airborne maneuver-

Table: Agewell Genemod

Age Category	Unmodded Age	Agewell Mod Age	Ability Adjustments
Adult	16-39	16-59	Original Scores
Middle Age	40-59	60-79	-1 to STR, DEX, CON; +1 to INT, WIS and CHA
Old	60-79	80-99	-1 to STR, DEX, CON; +1 to INT, WIS and CHA
Venerable	80+	100+	-1 to STR, DEX, CON; +1 to INT, WIS and CHA

ability improved by one category.

Beowulf (PL 6) (Neural)

Beowulf was originally conceived as a military performance enhancer, but quickly found its way into the private sector. Designed to boost eyesight and reaction time, the genemod also eliminates the need for eyeglasses, contacts or expensive surgeries to correct minor vision problems.

Beowulf sharpens vision and increases reaction time, granting the recipient a +1 racial bonus on Spot and Initiative checks.

Birth Breed (PL 6)

Breed completely redesigns the female reproductive system, making childbirth virtually painless and shortening pregnancy. A woman modified by Breed has pregnancies lasting between 7 and 7/12 months, rather then the three trimesters that were the human norm until now.

The woman's pelvic girdle alters its chemical structure slightly, allowing the pelvis to become malleable and cartilaginous when exposed to pregnancy hormones to accommodate the child, without sacrificing strength and durability at other times. Vaginal tissue becomes elastic and regenerates more quickly, vastly reducing the pain of childbirth and the time spent in labor.

Bi-Shift (PL 6)

Like Hetro-norm, Bi-Shift targets the portion of the hypothalamus responsible for sexual attraction. While Hetro-norm eliminates the genetic potential for same sex attraction, Bi-Shift increases it, allowing the patient to enjoy both genders equally. The Tempmod version of Bi-Shift is the 'party drug' of the 21st century. The Choicer pseudo-nation often incorporates Bi-Shift temp mods into their Beltane Fire celebrations.

Conservative legislators have attempted to ban Bi-Shift and prevent its sale to minors, and have succeeded in making it a controlled substance in some jurisdictions. Possession of Bi-Shift is considered a felony in most Lifer Enclaves.

Bodyclit (PL 6)

Bodyclit rewires the peripheral nervous system, increasing nerve density in specially targeted areas, adding additional erogenous zones. Depending on the patient's wishes, new pleasure buttons might be indistinguishable from the surrounding skin, a secret known only to the modified patient and their lovers, or might be proudly marked with a sensitive little bud of flesh. New clitori hidden behind the earlobe are common among body-mod enthusiasts of both sexes.

Careerist (PL 6) (Neural)

Predisposition to a certain job does not guarantee a child modified with Careerist will inevitably gravitate towards it, but the minor genetic advantages this mod offers a child provide an edge in the workplace. By increasing blood flow and neural connectivity in the areas of the brain responsible for tasks like language, mechanical reasoning, mathematical aptitude, among others,

Careerist imbues the patient with a 'knack' for a specific job. Parents will often 'choose' a favored career for their gestating offspring. Once chosen, the Careerist selection cannot be changed.

Anyone modified by Careerist can chose to receive either a +2 racial bonus on any one Profession skills of choice, or a +1 racial bonus on any two closely related Profession skills.

Chainmail (PL 6)

The Chainmail genemod increases skin density. A soldier enhanced with Chainmail is not bullet proof by any means, but is far more resistant to injury than a normal human, without sacrificing a fully human appearance.

This genemod grants the recipient a +1 natural armor bonus to Defense.

Compass (PL 6) (Neural)

Compass takes its name from the 'moral compass' its designed to instill in its recipients. Compass alters the human brain, changing the way the patient responds to stress, fear and anger, and increases 'herding' instincts and conformity to the group. Psychologists are divided on how much Compass actually has over human behavior.

Any creature modified with Compass adds 'law' to their list of allegiances.

Cornucopia (PL 6)

Cornucopia alters the way the human body processes nutrition, adding additional layers of complexity to the digestive process. As a result, the recipient gets more benefit from food, requiring much less than an ordinary person. Metabolism increases, weight drops and food budgets shrink.

A person enhanced with Cornucopia requires only ½ the food required by a normal person.

Crisis (PL 7) (Neural)

Crisis rewires a recipient's neurology, increasing blood flow to the areas of the brain that govern abstract reasoning, emotional control, as well as better coordinating instinctive reactions between the brain and spinal column. Those enhanced with Crisis are amazingly resilient when confronted with mind influencing effects and psionic tampering, not to mention being perceptive and quick witted.

A soldier enhanced with Crisis receives a +1 racial bonus on WILL saves made to resist Psionic abilities, as well as a +1 racial bonus on Initiative checks.

DaVinci (PL 6) (Neural)

DaVinci was designed to increase activity in the intuitive, creative, left hemisphere of the brain. Children modified with DaVinci are gifted artists and inventors, capable of great leaps of logic and imagination.

A person enhanced with DaVinci receives a +1 racial bonus on any Craft skill of choice, and one Perform skill of choice, chosen when the genemod is implanted.

Delphi (PL 7) (Neural)

By increasing blood flow and neural connectivity in the temporal lobe and hypothalmus, geneticists are able to trigger a very minor precognitive gift in the patient. Delphi gives the patient an insight into future trends, random chance and probabilities, traits well respected in business and the military.

A person enhanced by Delphi receives a +1 insight bonus on Initiative, Gamble and Profession (any related to predicting future behavior, such as stocks or politics) checks.

Diplomatica (PL 7) (Neural)

The Diplomatica genemod alters the patient's mind, increasing abstract reasoning capability, imagination and the potential for empathy. Children enhanced by Diplomatica are more confidant, better public speakers and natural leaders, at least according to the genemod's sell sheets. Diplomatica enhanced politicians and corporate raiders seem to prove that theory right.

Anyone enhanced with the Diplomatica genemod receives a +1 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Bluff checks.

Freshen (PL 6)

Freshen induces subtle, body wide changes in the recipient, all of which are designed around one goal: make the recipient smell better. Freshen alters the way the recipient's body processes food and excretes waste, damping down sweat, making waste odors more tolerable

In females, this mod also changes menstruation from a monthly to a quarterly event. Freshen is an omnipresent genemod, and non-Freshened children are often at a subtle disadvantage among their altered peers, leading some experts to push for Freshen to be applied to all children in utero, along with mandatory immunizations and disease proofing.

Anyone using the Scent special ability to track a creature with the Freshen genemod has the difficulty of the check increased by +2, due to that creature's lack of distinctive body odor.

Genoreceptor (PL 7)

The Genoreceptor mod is the cornerstone of modern genetic engineering, and effectively created a new human subspecies, one perfectly adapted to a brave new world where genetics are in constant flux.

Anyone modified with Genoreceptor receives a +6 racial bonus on all FORT saves made to survive genetic engineering, or made to resist the genetic damage caused by Temp Mods.

Heavyweight (PL 6)

Heavyweight is a relatively simple genemod, which replaces the bones in the recipient's hands with dense but flexible cartilage, increasing striking power without increasing the chance of broken bones from an unlucky strike. Hands enhanced with this mod have swollen joints and appear slightly larger than normal.

A soldier enhanced by Heavyweight deals an additional +1 point of damage with unarmed strikes.

Hetro-norm (PL 6) (Neural)

Hetro-norm targets the hypothalamus, the tiny portion of the brain responsible for a variety of biological tasks, including controlling metabolism and body temperature, as well as establishing a person's sexual orientation. Hetro-norm is one of the most commonly implanted fetal genemods, and virtual every commercial geneticist's office in the conservative America keeps a large supply on hand.

Most pyschologists question the genemod's efficacy. While hetro-norm might prevent a biological attraction to members of the same sex, children grown with this genemod might still be homosexual for social, psychological or cultural reasons.

Hetro-norm is a hotly debated genemod, and gay rights activists and others have made several attempts to have the gene-mod outlawed.

Hive (PL 7) (Neural)

Hive was initially developed to allow humans to adapt to the cramped conditions aboard arc-ships and generational starships. Instead, its use in adapting children to the urbanized, industrialized 21st and 22nd centuries quickly became obvious.

Hive modified humans are uniformly petite, always at the low end of racial height and weight norms, and have an instinctive level of cooperation and conformity, finding it easy to live in close quarters. The US Navy offers all submarine crews the Hive mod, as do most other world navies and space programs.

Thanks to Hive the patient receives a +1 racial bonus on Sense Motive and Knowledge: civics checks, due to their keen understanding of how humans interact.

Hivelove (PL 7)

Hivelove is a gene-mod that completely rewrites the way the female reproductive system interacts with human sperm. It is designed for polyandrous lovers who want to 'cherry pick' the best genetic traits from a myraid of lovers, and is a direct outgrowth of the orgiastic Beltane rites of Choicer America. A woman modified with this gene-twist can absorb and rewrite genetic information from all viable sperm introduced to her within a 24-48 hour window of conception.

Children born to a Hivelove mother resemble their mother strongly, but have little physical resemblance to any of their many potential 'genetic' fathers. Hivelove children tend to be slightly fitter, more attractive and intelligent than their natural born counterparts, as they take the best and strongest alleles from a variety of different genetic donors.

Hivelove children share the designer mutations, Lifechain abilities, soft tech bionics and genemods of ALL their potential fathers, allowing a mother modded with this genetwist to whelp vastly superhuman offspring.

The legal status of Hivelove children is a minor legal controversy. Many jurisdictions rule that for the purposes of child support and inheritance, the resulting child is the offspring of all potential fathers. Other courts have ruled that Hivelove children are essentially fatherless, following court decisions concerning modified human females and other species that reproduce asexually. Of course, one of the Hivelove child's genetic fathers might legally adopt the child, rendering all further questions of parentage moot.

Lifeline (PL 6)

Lifeline increases the blood's clotting factors, and allows the body to quickly seal damaged blood vessels, increasing an injured soldiers chances of survival. Lifeline is one of the most common genemods implanted in soldiers.

A creature enhanced with Lifeline automatically stabilizes when injured; once reduced to 0 hp, the modified creature does not lose additional HP unless wounded further.

Marathoner (PL 6)

Marathoner increases cardiovascular endurance and strengthens a recipients knees and ankles, giving them a physique similar to a long distance runner after completing the treatment.

A creature enhanced with Marathoner gains the Run feat.

Marybirth (PL 7)

Marybirth is an advanced reproductive genemod that allows women to bear offspring pathogenically, without sexual contact. When used in conjunction with over the counter fertility drugs, a woman modified with this gene-twist conceives asexually and begins a genetically modified but otherwise normal pregnancy.

The woman's Marybirth offspring is effectively a cloned version of herself. The fertility packs used in conjunction with this genemod contain various 'plug ins' which change the clone's gender or race, or carry other genetic 'appearance-mods'. Marybirth clones are always female, unless a 'Y-Inclusive' fertility pack is purchased.

Milkmaid (PL 6)

A woman enhanced by Milkmaid incorporates cow and goat DNA, enabling her to produce high protein, naturally sweetened breast milk at will. Sharing breast milk and even incorporating it into food when cooking for your closest family and friends have become popular 22nd century affectations, especially since the fall of wide-spread industrialized agriculture. Surprisingly, this practice is equally common in both pseudo-nations, though for vastly different symbolic reasons.

A woman modified with Milkmaid can produce enough milk to sustain a single adult humanoid for a day, assuming she is well fed and given sufficient water.

Minesweeper (PL 6) (Neural)

Minesweeper integrates canine olfactory structures into the human respiratory system, and is a precursor to later gene therapies, designed to give a humanoids a bloodhound's scent ability. Designed in response to roadside bombs and the carnage they can inflict, Minesweeper increases a soldier's sense of smell to nearly superhuman levels, and is designed specifically to detect the stench of combustibles.

A soldier modified with Minesweeper gains a +1 racial bonus on REF saves made to avoid concealed explosives, as well as a +1 racial bonus on Search checks made to find explosives, combustible chemicals or firearms.

Moe Facesculpt (PL 7)

Cosmetic face and body sculpting is nothing new for gene-science. However, the sheer complexity of the Moe facesculpt ensured it didn't enter the genome until well into Progress Level 7. The Moe Facesculpt reworks the face to conform to an idealized anime look: huge, luminous eyes, heart shaped chins, tiny lips and vestigial noses. Since everything from the amount of light entering the pupil to skeletal structure to the arrangement of throat muscles must be designed for, this is an exceptionally pricey gene-mod.

Anyone with a Moe facesculpt suffers a –2 Disguise penalty among unmodified humans.

Mojo (PL 6) (Neural)

Mojo is a precursor genemod, the development of which eventually leads to even more impressive psionic powers. Mojo enhances the temporal and prefrontal lobes, giving the subject a ultra-low level precognitive gift which is triggered by stress and adrenaline. In short, Mojo creates a better and more battle capable soldier, one who can sometimes predict his adversary's moves in the heat of battle.

Mojo enhances the recipient by providing a +1 insight bonus on Initiative checks and granting a +1 insight bonus on damage rolls made with ranged weapons or ranged powers.

Monkey (PL 6)

The Monkey genemod implants a dexterous and fairly strong prehensile tail in an otherwise humanoid patient. This gene-twist is popular among body-mod enthusiasts and the presence of a cute, genesculpted tail is a guaranteed meta-porn money maker. However, the genemod is also chosen for more practical reasons; an additional hand is incredibly useful for mechanics and engineers around the world.

The character's prehensile tail is strong and supple enough to manipulate objects like another hand, and can briefly support the character's entire weight while climbing. If a character performs a skill requiring fine manipulation using only her tail, she suffers a -2 racial penalty on the check, due to the lack of fine motor control. The tail is not dexterous enough to be used in combat.

Nomad (PL 6)

Nomad helps a recipient better adapt to heat and harsh environments. The Nomad genemod darkens the recipient's skin, alters kidney and bladder functioning to process water more efficiently, and alters the subject's sweat glands and hypothalamus for better temperature control.

Thanks to Nomad, a modified creature can go without water for up to three days, plus a number of hours equal to his CON score before needing to make FORT saves to resist dehydration. The Nomad genemod grants the subject a +1 racial bonus on FORT saves made to resist heat exhaustion and the effects of extreme temperature.

Nymphette (PL 6)

Nymphette is one of the older genemods, billed as a sexual enhancer for women. By increasing vaginal sensitivity and blood flow, Nymphette allows for faster, stronger and more numerous orgasms, even consistent female ejaculation.

Nymphette also allows a woman to take conscious control over her reproduction; a Nymphette modded woman's natural state is sterile, unless she mentally commands her ovaries to release eggs and allow her uterine walls to attach them. "Turning on" the organs requires only a few minutes of intense concentration, as does returning them to an inactive state.

Virtually every girl-child in the Choicer pseudo-nation is implanted with this genemod sometime around age 10, along with her school immunizations. The Treaty of Boston (which ended the War, and codified the relationship between the Lifers and their rivals) exempts Lifer aligned girls from being forced to accept this gene-twist as part of mandatory vaccines.

Oncol (PL 6)

Injectable vaccines for specific types of cancer began appearing at the end of PL 5, but Oncol offers the patient complete immunity to virtually every known form of cancer. This life saving genemod prevents the genetic transcription errors that lead to cancer.

Additionally the patient receives a +1 racial bonus on all FORT saves made to resist disease or mutation.

Drawback: The patient's lifesaving genetic stability can make it more difficult to perform farther genetic alterations. The patient suffers a –1 racial penalty on all FORT saves made to safely receive additional gene-mods.

Opossum (PL 7) (Neural)

This genemod allows a genetically modified creature to take voluntary control over his or her autonomic nervous system, entering a trance like 'false death' state. The soldier can slow his respiration at will and enter a death-like trance state, during which he uses up no oxygen, and requires no food or water.

A soldier can remain in the trance state for a number of days equal to his CON modifier. During this time, the creature's body mimics the natural processes of decomposition, imitating lividity, rigor mortis, even simulating the bloating and decay of a corpse. While entranced, it requires a DC 22 Treat Injury check to detect a living Opossum modified soldier.

Before entering the trance state, the soldier must choose to awaken whenever he suffers damage, or when a set period of time has passed; all traces of the death trance vanish a few moments after awakening, without harm to the soldier.

Orca (PL 6)

Orca introduces killer whale traits into the human genome, increasing lung capacity and temperature resistances. Originally popular among surfers and water sports enthusiasts in lieu of wetsuits and life-support gear, Orca's utility has made it popular among military, police and firefighters.

Anyone modified with Orca receives a +1 racial bonus on FORT saves made to withstand low temperatures, and can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their CON modifier before needing to begin making saves to resist suffocation or drowning.

Otherskin (PL 6)

Otherskin is a cosmetic genemod that changes the recipient's skin color and texture. The recipient's body can be painted like a work, of art; you can choose skin the color of any race on earth, or something new. Your skin might be shockingly pink, or the stark black and white of a killer whale, may be covered with a fine layer of iridescent scales or a soft, feline pelt.

A handful of exceptionally talented gene-artists have produced even more exotic Otherskins, incorporating skin the texture of a rhino's hide or a shark's sandpapery skin, or modified human skin cells with glass-fish alleles for a strange transparency.

Regardless of the recipient's appearance, skin and tissue density are unchanged, and the otherskin provides no additional protection. Some, or all of the patient's body can be modified, and many people conceal this fashionable mutation under their every day clothes.

Drawback: Among unmodified humans, the character suffers –4 racial penalties on Disguise checks.

Pet Mod (PL 6)

Pet Mods cannot be preformed on humans; instead they're preformed on cats, dogs, monkeys, birds- humanity's pets. Pet Mods increase an animals intelligence and extend lifespan, ensuring that 21st century children don't have to deal with the pain of losing a furry companion until well into adulthood.

Any Animal or Vermin enhanced by Pet Mod receives a +2 racial bonus on Intelligence, and has its base life span doubled. The genetically engineered pet gains the ability to understand, though not necessarily speak, one language spoken by its master.

Pianist (PL 6)

Pianist increases manual dexterity and sensitivity, and is a favorite genemod among surgeons, craftsmen and artists of all kinds. While Pianist offers the recipient a genetic advantage, the recipient's skills and interests determine how that advantage is expressed.

Anyone modified by Pianist receives a +1 racial bonus on any two of the following two kinds of checks, chosen when the genemod is first implanted: Craft (any), Forgery, Disable Device, Repair or Perform (any instrumental).

Prevention (PL 6)

Prevention is added to the genome of children by concerned parents and into drug offenders by the courts. Prevention alters the way the body's neurochemistry is affected by drugs, rendering an altered patient completely immune to the effects of alcohol and most PL 5 and early PL 6 street drugs.

Improvements to the liver and pancreas give the subject virtually complete drug resistance: the patient could snort half a kilo of cocaine without any worse effect than a mild headache and down two gallons of vodka with no more effect than if he'd drank a similar amount of tap water.

The only downside to prevention is the fact that the genemod prevents opiate-based pain relievers and anesthetics from working on the subject. Genegineered new drugs, not 'screened for' by Prevention, are introduced with regularity.

Brain Dogs are a breed of genetically altered canines, far more intelligent than even the most clever Pet Mod canines. These dogs are bred exclusively for military and police service.

Brain Dogs have a base Purchase DC of 26, and are considered Restricted items (+2 Purchase DC Modifier). The creation of a Brain Dog requires nearly a year, and a genetic sample from their designated master-to-be.

Brain Dogs

By interlacing human genetic material with the canine genome, scientists have created highly intelligent, semi-sentient working dogs. Brain Dogs are nearly as intelligent as an adult human, and thanks to the inclusion of parrot and human genes into their vocal cords, can communicate verbally with humans. Though the Brain Dog is nearly as intelligent as a human, it is still governed by canine instincts: sex, food and fun are paramount, as is the Brain Dog's role in the pack. Brain Dogs enjoy human company, and defer to their gene-linked masters.

Brain Dogs vary in appearance, with a variety breeds available. From purse dogs favored by heiresses, to small, clever and muscular poodle/ hound hybrids favored by the police drug squads, to bulky pit breeds and Dobermans used by security forces, Brain Dogs are an amazingly diverse engineered species.

Brain Dogs are genetically linked to a particular master, whose genetic material was used to enhance the canine. Master and canine share a deep empathic bond. Many Brain Dogs are farther enhanced with bionics and military gene-mods. Most Brain Dogs have a lifespan of between three and four decades.

A character with abilities from the Dog Handler feat tree may use those feats in conjunction with a Brain Dog partner.

Empathic Bond (EX): The Brain Dog shares a genetic bond with the master. Master and canine can always sense one another's mood, as long as they are within 1 mile of each other. As long as master and canine are within 1 mile of each other, each can determine the distance and direction to the other.

As long as the master and Brain Dog are within 30 ft of each other, both benefit from the Alertness feat, like a mage and her familiar. Brain Dogs are intelligent enough to understand the language spoken by their designated master, though they usually can't speak or read.

Scent (EX): This ability allows the dog to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes and track by sense of smell. See special qualities in chapter eight of the *D20 Modern core rulebook* for more information.

Brain Dog

CR: 1; Small or Medium Animal; HD:2d8+4 hp; HP 13; Mas 15; Init +2; SPD 40 ft; Defense 13; Touch 12; flatfooted 11 (+2 DEX, +1 natural); BAB +1; Grap +3; Attack +3 melee (1d6+3 bite); full attack +3 melee (1d6+3 bite); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ: scent, low-light vision; AL none or owner; SV FORT +5 REF +5WILL +1; AP 0; Rep +0; STR 15, DEX 15, CON 15, INT 7, WIS 12, CHA 6

Skills: Jump +4, Listen +5, Spot +6, Survival +1 (+5 when tracking by scent) Swim +5, Sense Motive +5

Feats: None

Advancement: None

The Pianist Genemod

Prodigy (PL 6) (Neural)

Prodigy reorders the mathematical, analytical right hemisphere of the brain, increasing mental acuity, memory and mathematical ability. Prodigy is designed to give the recipient an instinctive understanding of spatial relationships, numbers and finance.

After being enhanced with Prodigy, a recipient gains a +1 racial bonus on Craft: structural, Gamble and Knowledge: physical sciences checks.

Pro-Pleasure (PL 7)

Pro-pleasure partially rewrites human gender, transforming a passing sexual fad into a genetic revolution. As taboos about anal sex waned, it became the new hip affectation for both men and women. Pro-pleasure makes it even more so, rewriting a female recipient's genetic code to the point she develops a prostate, as well as increasing the nerve density and skin elasticity to make anal sex more pleasurable.

Some gene-docs are concerned that prostate cancer (a disease long eliminated by PL 7) may make a comeback among an unexpected new gender, and require their patients to accept the Oncol genemod or a similar anti-cancer therapy before proceeding with this genemod.

Regen One (PL 6) ; Regen Two (PL 7)

By altering the patient's metabolism, his or her innate healing capabilities are increased. Wounds that would have been considered life threatening just a few decades ago heal easily and with minimal scaring.

Regen One had an unexpected side effect: it vastly increased the speed at which the patient's hair and nails grew, requiring both to be trimmed daily. In females, the hymen regenerated after every sexual encounter.

The PL 7 version of this gene therapy, Regen Two, eliminated these annoyances. Regen One is still common among the poor, as well as maintaining a devoted cult following among fetishists and cultures that prize virginity.

When receiving long-term medical care, any person with either version of the Regen genemod recovers an additional 2d4 HP per day. A person modified with either Regen modification automatically stabilizes when reduced to negative HP.

Satyr Multi (PL 6)

New technologies are driven by their sexual and recreational applications, and genemods are no exception. Satyr Multi was one of the first commercial genemods, and remains one of the most popular and widespread.

Satyr Multi improves the vascular and neural structure of the human penis, increasing size, allowing for a nearly instant recovery period after orgasm, and allowing for 'semi-voluntary' sexual response. With concentration a male modifed with this genetwist can 'program' himself to reach orgasm in a specific time frame, from minutes to hours.

Combined with Otherskin body sculpting, more exotic mutations are possible, with gene-mod enthusiasts completely resculpting their genitals, taking inspiration from the animal kingdom, xenobiology and fetish fantasy.

Scout (PL 6) (Neural)

By blending avian homing instincts and adding magnetically sensitive organelles to the brain, in tune with planet's electromagnetic field, the Scout genemod gives its recipients a phenomenal sense of direction.

A person with the Scout genemod can always sense magnetic north, as if he had 5+ ranks in Survival. With a minute of concentration, the person can sense the relative distance and direction to their home or any other structure they've spent several weeks in.

Snarl (PL 6)

Snarl is a curiosity, a genemod created accidentally by the civilian cosmetics/medical industry, which has been appropriated and widely used by the military. Snarl increases skin elasticity and facial expressiveness, allowing a gene-modified creature to contort his or her face in a wide variety of disturbing ways. Snarl is somewhat popular as a psychological weapon.

A creature enhanced with Snarl receives a +2 racial bonus on Intimidate checks.

Squad Batch (PL 7) (Neural)

Squad Batch is similar to the civilian "Wedding Band" genemod, in that it creates an emotional link between genetically modified individuals. Using donated genetic material and neural tissue from every member of the group, this genemod establishes a low level psionic bond between a group of soldiers.

There is no limit to the number of creatures that can be included in a single 'batched' squad, but all members of the squad must receive this gene mod simultaneously and remain in close proximity during the recovery period. If a new creature wishes to be included in the link, this genemod must be re-sequenced.

All members of the batched squad instinctively know the mood and general emotional state of their squad mates if they are within 1 mile. Furthermore, all squad members instinctively know the distance and relative direction to any other members of the 'batched' squad, as well as knowing instantly if one or more members of the squad are killed.

Squad mates receive a +4 racial bonus on Sense Motive checks made against fellow squad members.

Tapdance (PL 6)

Tapdance increases leg strength and joint flexibility, dramatically improving a recipient's dexterity, grace and muscular control.

A soldier or athlete enhanced by tap dance receives a +1 racial bonus on Balance, Move Silently, Jump, and Perform: dance checks.

Technique (PL 6) (Neural)

The Technique genemod is designed purely to allow modern children to cope with a rapid fire, ultra industrialized 21st century. Technique modifies the eye's structure and how the brain processes visual information, ensuring Technique-modified children never feel anything other than perfectly at ease in front of a computer screen.

A person modified with Technique receives a +1 racial bonus on Computer Use and Drive checks.

Wedding Band (PL 6) (Neural)

Wedding Band is a controversial genemod, because its critics claim it uses chemical brainwashing to stimulate false emotions. Typically 'sold' as a pair of linked genemods, Wedding Band is designed to bring couples (or other combinations) closer together. When a couple receives the Wedding Band genemods, each partner's neurochemistry is altered so that while when they are near their partner, exposed to that person's pheromones, they feel a deep sense of contentment and well being.

Couples are cautioned on the downside of Wedding Band. If gene-modified lover spends too long away from his or her mate, the 'withdrawal' from that person's pheromones can lead to a deep depression. Some jurisdictions only allow this genemod to be implanted to legally married couples who have undergone a period of consoling. The Temp-mod version of this genome is popular among young lovers looking for a few days of passionate romance.

West Point (PL 7) (Neural)
The West Point genemod increases neural interconnections and blood flow to the portions of the brain responsible for memory, pattern recognition and problem solving.

A creature enhanced with the West Point genemod receives a +1 racial bonus on Knowledge: tactics, and Knowledge: physical sciences checks, and can always choose to take 20 when making any Knowledge check.

Whetstone (PL 7) (Neural)
Whetstone is a very specific neural mod, which increases the recipients ability to perceive spatial relationships, calculate vectors and track objects in motion. These neural modifications give the subject a phenomenal grasp of abstract mathematics, but more importantly, gives the modified creature an instinctive gift for swordsmanship. A creature modified by Whetstone knows how to strike with machine like precision and for maximum lethality.

A creature modified with Whetstone inflicts an additional +1 point of damage when striking with any edged weapons, including natural edged weapons (such as claws, fangs and body spines). In addition, the subject receives a +1 insight bonus on Knowledge: physical sciences checks.

Gene-Mod	Purchase DC	Progress Level	Restriction
A-10tive	DC 15	PL 6	–
Agewell	DC 20	PL 7	–
Athlete Gold	DC 19	PL 7	Licensed (+1)
Aviator	DC 24	PL 6	–
Beowulf	DC 16	PL 6	Licensed (+1)
Birth Breed	DC 17	PL 6	–
Bi-Shift	DC 14	PL 6	
Bodyclit	DC 13	PL 6	–
Careerist	DC 16	PL 6	–
Chainmail	DC 21	PL 6	Restricted (+2)
Compass	DC 17	PL 6	–
Cornacopia	DC 15	PL 6	–
DaVinici	DC 15	PL 6	–
Delphi	DC 20	PL 7	Licensed (+1)
Diplomatica	DC 16	PL 7	–
Freshen	DC 12	PL 6	–
Genoreceptor	DC 15	PL 7	–
Heavyweight	DC 15	PL 6	Restricted (+2)
Hetro-norm	DC 13	PL 6	–
Hive	DC 13	PL 7	–
Hivelove	DC 19	PL 7	Licensed (+1)
Lifeline	DC 23	PL 6	Licensed (+1)
Marathoner	DC 16	PL 6	–
Minesweeper	DC 19	PL 6	Military (+3)
Marybirth	DC 15	PL 7	–
Marybirth Fertility Packs (various genomes)	DC 4	PL 7	–

Gene-Mod	Purchase DC	Progress Level	Restriction
Milkmaid	DC 14	PL 6	–
Moe Facesculpt	DC 20	PL 7	–
Mojo	DC 26	PL 6	Military (+3)
Monkey	DC 16	PL 6	–
Nomad	DC 14	PL 6	–
Nymphette	DC 15	PL 6	–
Oncol	DC 12	PL 7	–
Orca	DC 16	PL 6	–
Opossum	DC 18	PL 7	Restricted (+2)
Otherskin	DC 14	PL 6	–
Pianist	DC 14	PL 6	–
Pet Mod	DC 13	PL 6	–
Prevention	DC 16	PL 6	–
Prodigy	DC 17	PL 6	–
Pro-Pleasure	DC 15	PL 7	–
Regen One	DC 18	PL 6	–
Regen Two	DC 22	PL 7	–
Satyr Multi	DC 17	PL 6	–
Scout	DC 16	PL 6	–
Snarl	DC 14	PL 6	–
Squad Batch	DC 22	PL 7	Restricted (+2)
Tapdance	DC 23	PL 6	–
Technique	DC 14	PL 6	–
Wedding Band	DC 16	PL 6	None or Licensed (+1)
West Point	DC 24	PL 7	Licensed (+1)
Whetstone	DC 22	PL 7	Military (+3)

Gene Feats

Desire and sheer willpower can push the human body past normal limits, and that truth also applies to the genetically altered. Fanaticism, experimentation and spontaneous mutation allows the genetically engineered elite to do the impossible and use their natural and manufactured gifts in new ways.

Just like any new operating system, genetic modifications are software. The only difference is that genetic software runs on human machines, and a whole new breed of genetic hackers have learned to exploit security loopholes in genetic plugins. Worse, variant strain humans have become the natural predators of a new kind of life form- metahumans.

In order to select a Gene Feat, you must have at least one permanent genetic alteration, Lifechain ability, engineered superpower or Soft Tech bionic implant. Like genetic modifications, Gene Feats are dominant alleles, and can be passed on to offspring.

1. Carrion Scavenger
2. Evolutionary Messenger
3. Gene Feeder
4. Genemask
5. Genethief
6. Genderless
7. Immunity
8. Metabolism Burn
9. Neurological Blindspot
10. Opiate Cloud
11. Optical Misdirection
12. Parasitic Immortality
13. Parthogenesis
14. Remote Breeder
15. Reproductive Puppeteer
16. Scanner
17. Secrete Mimetic
18. Sexual Genegraft
19. Zoological Espionage

Carrion Scavenger (Gene Feat)

You eat things that would sicken and even kill others, gaining nutrition from filth.

Benefit: If necessary, you can survive on a diet of rotting garbage, carrion and anything even vaguely organic. You can survive on a diet of wood shavings, coal, bone and even fouler things. You receive a +8 racial bonus on FORT saves against ingested poisons.

Evolutionary Messenger (Gene Feat)

You are the parent of a new human species, able to spread designer mutations sexually.

Benefit: By spending an action point while engaged in sex with another humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature, you body begins secreting powerful mutagens. Your partner or partners must make a FORT save (DC 10 + your CON modifier + your Hit Die) or find their genetics altering themselves to match yours.

On a failed save, your lover must begin making FORT as if having a single Supernatural ability genetically engineered implanted (DC 20, 25 successes required). Once the mutation process is complete, your lover gains any genetic enhancements, genefeats, Lifechain abilities, deformity feats, mutations or soft tech bionic implants you have.

Genefeeder (Gene Feat)

You have developed new, parasitic organs that allow you to feed on the genetically enhanced.

Benefit: You gain hollow fangs, which retract into the roof of your mouth when not in use, and a natural bite attack. If you bite any creature with a genetic enhancement, mutation, Lifechain ability or soft tech bionic implant, in addition to normal damage, each round your victim must make a FORT save (DC 10 + your CON modifier + your HD) or suffer 1 point of temporary CON damage. Your target must be grappled, bound or otherwise helpless to continue feeding.

Each point of CON damage you heals you by 1d4 points, up to your normal maximum. While you may bite inflict CON damage on a target while at full HP, you receive no additional benefit from doing so.

Bite Damage by Size		Size	Damage
Size	Damage	Medium	1d6
Fine	1 point	Large	1d8
Diminutive	1d2	Huge	2d6
Tiny	1d3	Gargantuan	2d8
Small	1d4	Colossal	4d6

Genemask (Gene Feat)

You can conceal your genetic enhancements from detection.

Benefit: Your genetic modifications, mutations and soft tech bionics cannot be detected by a character using the Scanner gene feat, nor by any technological genetic scanner, unless you allow them to be. You 'read' as a normal, unmodified humanoid unless you make a conscious decision to suppress this feat's effects.

Special: If you are a Lifechained creature, you can use this feat to temporarily mask your Lifechained nature. By spending an action point, you are considered to have no Lifechain feats for the purposes of predatory Lifechain abilities, such as Lifechained Primacy. You retain use of your Lifechain mutations, but become less vulnerable to Lifechained predators. This enhancement lasts for a number of hours equal to your CON modifier.

Genethief (Gene Feat)

You prey on the genetically enhanced, and can steal their superhuman gifts for your own use.

Prerequisite: Genefeeder

Benefit: If you drain at least one point of CON from a victim with a genetic enhancement, Lifechain ability or soft tech bionic implant, you may choose to temporarily duplicate any one of the victim's genetic enhancements, gene feats, Lifechain abilities or soft tech implants.

The new ability manifests within 1d6 rounds of absorption, and you may use the ability freely for a number of hours equal to your CON modifier. At the end of this period, you are considered *fatigued*.

If you feed on another victim while manifesting a prior stolen ability, you lose that ability and must select a new ability from your latest victim.

Genderless (Gene Feat)

Un-modified humans are locked forever into one gender; you are not. Your body can shift between male and female with a thought, a natural gift that comes in handy both in the bedroom and out on a mission.

Benefit: As a full round action that provokes acts of opportunity, you can enter a trance state where, through an intense act of concentration, rewrite your chromosomal structure and change gender. When gender shifting, you always shift into a specific member of the opposite sex, which always resembles your natural form, as if your two bodies are close relatives.

When gendershifting, you receive a +10 racial bonus on Disguise checks against those unaware of your hermaphatite nature.

You can father children as a male or carry a child to term while in female form; you cannot gender shift while pregnant or nursing. If you possess any feats or class abilities usable only by a specific gender, you may use the ability in either form, assuming the ability is compatible with your new anatomy.

Immunity (Gene Feat)

Your immune system is remarkably resilient, protecting you from even the most virulent diseases.

Benefit: You become immune to all non-magical diseases, and gain a +4 racial bonus on FORT saves made to resist animal or plant based toxins.

Metabolism Burn (Gene Feat)

Hetronorm, Bi-Shift, Nomad and Cornucopia are among the century's most common genemods, but they carry a potentially fatal flaw. They modify the subject's hypothalamus, altering sexual orientation and appetite.

Unfortunately, the hypothalamus controls far more than just that: it also governs a person's metabolism and body temperature. Genetic predators can exploit a victim's existing genemods like a hacker exploits a line of bad code, making anyone with one of these mods (virtually anyone conforming to the norms of 22nd century America) a potential target.

Benefit: By spending an action point, you begin secreting a deadly pheromone, which specifically targets anyone whose hypothalamus has been genetically modified. Anyone within 60 ft of you with one of these enhancements must succeed at a FORT save (DC 10 + your CON modifier + your Hit Dice) or immediately become *fatigued*, as their body rapidly burns through its store of chemical energy. Targets who are already *fatigued* become *exhausted* instead.

A victim's body temperature spikes dramatically, and if you chose to spend a second action point when activating this power, anyone who fails their initial FORT save, must make a second FORT save at the same DC or suffer 2d4 points of temporary CON damage.

Limitation: This feat only affects those with the following bio enhancements: Hetronorm, Bi-Shift, Nomad and Cornucopia. The GM may rule that characters with similar bio enhancements or any enhancement that would logically include the hypothalamus are also affected.

This feat only affects creatures with a reasonably normal, humanoid anatomy, and does not affect constructs, cyborgs, robots or undead. Nor does this feat affect anyone immune to toxins or disease, or protected by CBR equipment.

Neurological Blindspot (Gene Feat)

Your body produces pheromone keys that lock onto genetically altered brain tissue, making it difficult for the enhanced to concentrate in your presence, and giving you a kind of crude invisibility.

Benefit: You receive a +6 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks made against anyone with a genetic enhancement that restructures their brain. In addition, anyone with any of the effected genetic enhancements finds it difficult to concentrate in your presence, and suffer a –2 circumstance penalty on all Concentration checks when within 60 ft of you.

Limitation: This feat has no effect on anyone protected by CBR gear.

Special: The genetic enhancements marked as (Neural) are affected by this feat.

Opiate Cloud (Gene Feat)

Your body naturally produces a potent narcotic, and specially designed venom glands in your mouth and throat allow you to exhale a cloud of anesthetic vapors.

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one plus your CON modifier (minimum twice daily), you may breathe a line of opiates and mild neurotoxins, which has an effective range of 30 ft. Any creature caught within your breath weapon's area of effect is affected by a *sleep* spell cast by a mage of your total character level. This is an Extraordinary ability.

Optical Misdirection (Gene Feat)

The neural chaff your body produces is incredibly potent, causing pinprick hemorrhages and impulse transmission glitches in enhanced brains and optical nerves, making it difficult for the genetically enhanced to track you visual.

Prerequisite: Neurological Blindspot

Benefit: Anyone with vulnerable neural enhancements suffers a –1 penalty on all Initiative checks and suffers a 30% miss chance when attacking you with any ranged weapon or targeted spell. You must be within 90 ft of the attacker to gain the benefit of this feat.

Parasitic Immortality (Gene Feat)

You are a gene-twisted vampire, stealing the strength and the youth of the genetically altered.

Prerequisite: Genethief

Benefit: For every ten points of CON you drain from a genetically engineered victim, you may choose to physically regress to the beginning of the previous age category, losing any physical penalties associated with age in the process.

You may also choose to sacrifice a portion of your life span for a short-lived burst of strength, speed and stamina. By spending an action point, you can enter an adrenaline fueled, bio-enhanced state. You receive a +6 racial bonus to any two physical ability scores (STR, DEX or CON), and your base land speed increases by 10 ft. This bonus remains in effect for a number of minutes equal to your newly enhanced CON modifier.

At the end of the rush, your body degrades slightly, moving you towards the beginning of the next age category, with all the physical changes that entails. If you use this ability while in the Venerable age category, the effects are lethal once the rush wears off.

Parthogenesis (Gene Feat)

That highly complex life forms can't reproduce by mitosis, budding off exact duplicates, is an accepted fact of science. You ignore that fact, and can produce nearly identical genetic duplicates at will.

Benefit: By spending an action point, you can enter a hibernation state lasting 1d4+1 hours. During this time, you are semiconscious and helpless, as a genetic duplicate of yourself begins pushing out of your chest or budding off of your back. Your clone is genetically identical to you, shares your allegiances, ability scores, feats, class levels and genetic enhancements, including soft tech bionics. The clone does not possess any acquired traits that cannot be genetically encoded (like memory can be), such as scars, tattoos or hard tech bionics.

When the cloning process is complete, you and your clone awakens. Though you have no special control over your clone, since your life experiences are identical to that point, he will act as you would, in your best interest. You and your clone are *fatiuged* for 1d4 hours after the reproductive process is complete.

Your clone remains in existence for a number of hours equal to twice your CON score. At that point, its cells begin breaking down, and the creature suffers 1d4 points of CON and STR damage per hour thereafter. Once the clone dies, it crumbles into a mass of putrid organs and unreadable genetic trash within a few hours.

This ability only duplicates your body, not any equipment. The clone is nude when created, and you cannot use this ability when armored or wearing any restrictive clothing.

Remote Breeder (Gene Feat)

You can exhale a cloud of mobile, parasitic gametes, spreading your mutation and breeding neohumans with an airborne virus.

Prerequisite: Evolutionary Messenger

Benefit: In addition to spreading your mutation through mundane sex, you may choose to spend an action point and exhale a cloud of mutagenic vapors. Any living being within 60 ft with a reasonably normal anatomy must succeed at a FORT save (DC 8 + your CON modifier + your Hit Dice) or be affected by your Evolutionary Messenger ability.

Any fertile humanoid or monstrous humanoid female capable of bearing children within range must also make a second FORT save at the same DC or become pregnant with your offspring. Standard contraceptive bionics and genemods offer protection from this aspect of the feat.

Reproductive Puppeteer (Gene Feat)

Your spawn are the future of mankind, and have potent defenses, even in utero. Through concentration, you can take total control of anyone carring your offspring, the better to ensure your genome dominate the next generation.

Prerequisite: Remote Breeder

Benefit: At any time, you may issue a short *command* phrase (as the Acolyte Spell) to anyone who is carrying your offspring. The victim receives no save against this short, primal command, and must be able to see, hear and clearly understand you.

You may also issue more involved commands to your child-bearers. By spending an action point, you may use an effect equivalent to *charm person* as cast by a mage of your total character level. Unlike a typical charm effect, the victim resists with a FORT save, as the fetus within her takes temporary control of her autonomic nervous system, on your behalf.

As the command affects the target's physical body, not her mind, you cannot compel her to undertake purely mental actions, have any specific thoughts, nor prevent her from using psionic or magical abilities that require only a mental action to activate. You cannot use this ability against any creature protected by CBR gear.

Scanner (Gene Feat)

By sampling small amounts of flesh or fluid, you can build a genetic portrait of a person, and can 'read' a creature's genetic heritage with a touch.

Benefit: Your senses expand dramatically, offering you insight into a person's genetics. By making skin-to-skin contact with a living creature, you may make a Concentration check (DC 18) as a full round action. If the check is successful, you assemble a mental picture of the creature, including the following:

- Natural height and weight
- True race and species
- Gender
- Natural hair and eye color
- Age category
- The presence of any hereditary diseases or genetic anomalies
- The presence and kind of any genetic enhancements, mutations or soft tech bionics.

You may also consume minute physical forensic traces (like flakes of skin, blood, semen, hair follicles, ect) left behind at a scene to build a mental image of missing person. Except when dealing with most extremely virulent toxins or diseases, the amount of bio-matter consumed is too small to transmit disease.

Secrete Mimetic (Gene feat)

You can excrete a thick, gel from a nipple like organ hidden somewhere on your body. Using short acting RNA transcription, you can encode memories into this honeylike substance; those eating it can sample your memories.

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one plus your CON modifier (minimum twice daily), you may secrete a natural 'memory-gel'. Anyone eating the gel can experience one of your memories as if they had lived through it. The memory encoded in the gel can last a number of minutes equal to your CON score.

The memory becomes part of the diner's own memory, and can be recalled as easily as one of their own experiences. However, the memory is always slightly 'different' than a natural memory, marking it distinctly as a memory implant.

If the memory implant refers to something physically impossible for the subject (as are most cross gender memory implants), the subject is *shaken* for 1d4 rounds after eating the memory.

You may also choose to secrete a 'tutorial-gel' instead of a conventional memory gel. You may encode any skill you have 4 or more ranks into a tutorial gel. Anyone eating the tutorial gel receives a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill for 1d4 hours after eating the gel.

Sexual Genegraft (Gene feat)

Your body continually adapts to its surroundings. By trading fluids with a genetically superior creature, you can use your lover's genome as a template to modify your own genetics.

Benefit: By spending an action point while having sex with any genetically enhanced creature, you can copy that person's genetic material and use it to improve yourself. You may choose any one of your lover's genetic enhancements, gene feats, deformity feats, Lifechain abilities, Psionic or Psionic Precursor feats, mutations or soft tech implants. You temporarily gain the chosen enhancement, and are able to use it for a number of days equal to your CON modifier (minimum one day).

At the end of this period, you may attempt a DC 30 FORT save. If successful, you retain the genetic enhancement as an innate ability. If the FORT save fails, the temporary ability fades away. The new ability first manifests itself after eight hours of sleep or rest.

Zoological Espionage (Gene Feat)

Your body produces pheromones that forge a short lived telepathic bond between you and genetically enhanced mammals, allowing you to see through an animal's eyes and influence its behavior.

Benefit: You receive a +6 racial bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks made against a genetically enhanced animal, and have an almost instinctive understanding of the enhanced animal's behavior and desires.

By spending an action point, you can forge a chemical bond with any genetically enhanced mammal within 60 ft. The targeted creature receives no save against the effect; if it breathes your pheromones, you can now see through its eyes (and interestingly enough, smell and taste anything the creature does). You receive real time visual information from the creature as long as it remains within 1 mile of you, and does not enter any airtight area. Sounds are not conveyed.

While seeing through your impromptu familiar's eyes, you are semi-comatose, and can return to full consciousness as a standard action. You may maintain the trance state for a number of hours equal to the creature's CON modifier, before the link degrades into uselessness.

Sexually Transmitted Future: Roots of War

Sexuality has always defined the Otherverse and shaped the direction the Abortion War took, setting precedents for the conflict decades before the first shot was fired. The sexual and genetic revolution of the 2020s provided the genesis for the Choicer military machine, bringing together an unlikely assortment of groups together under the umbrella of the fledgling Covenant of the Goddess Universal.

The Panacean Release, the Homogenesis Genemod and a hundred other examples of early Choicer genetech were presented as gifts to early 21st Century humanity, especially North America's large and politically active gay community. Quickly realizing the benefits of mutual assistance (from increased R&D budgets to more lobbing punch), gay rights organizations lent their support to the Covenant's neo-pagans. The two groups had little in common except one all important factor: they had both been oppressed and abused by the same Evangelical Christian America that would eventually evolve into the Lifer pseudo-nation.

Several pro-choice and AIDs activist groups quickly joined the tentative alliance, lending their medical skills and technical knowledge to the cause. With their expertise, the flaws in the initial release of the Panacean gene-mod were corrected, and several revolutionary reproductive technologies, most particularly Nymphette, were released.

The late 2020s and early 2030s were a decade of limitless sexual freedom. For the first time in decades, there were no lethal STDs plaguing America, and thanks to Nymphette, accidental pregnancies were expected to be consigned to the dustbin of history by the end of the decade.

Evangelical America soundly rejected both technologies, and pushed to have them outlawed. The divisions between liberal and conservative deepened into ideological chasms. In response to the organized coalition of liberal interests, and their political successes, conservative America redoubled its efforts, both in the political arena, and in domestic terrorism. Gay bashing and clinic bombings became weekly occurrences, so common that the major networks started only bothering to cover incidents with multiple kills. Anything less than a pair of deaths never even made the national news. The Covenant funded and equipped the world's first post-human strike force, codenamed RAINBOW Liberty, to protect their people. And to avenge them when necessary.

A growing number of meta-historians claim the first battle of the American Abortion War wasn't in 2061, it was decades earlier in 2028, when the RAINBOW strike team went into battle for the first time. A group of superhumans, fighting for an exclusively political ideal…. a backlash was inevitable. Within a few short years, RAINBOW Liberty had spawned a host of imitators, rivals and enemies. America commissioned APEX, a new branch of the United States military, in response to the growing number of superhumans, while Evangelical America began the long, slow process of assembling it's secret army.

New Affiliation: RAINBOW Liberty
Official Designation: None, civilian organization
Formation Year: 2027-2028
Formally Disbanded: 2091

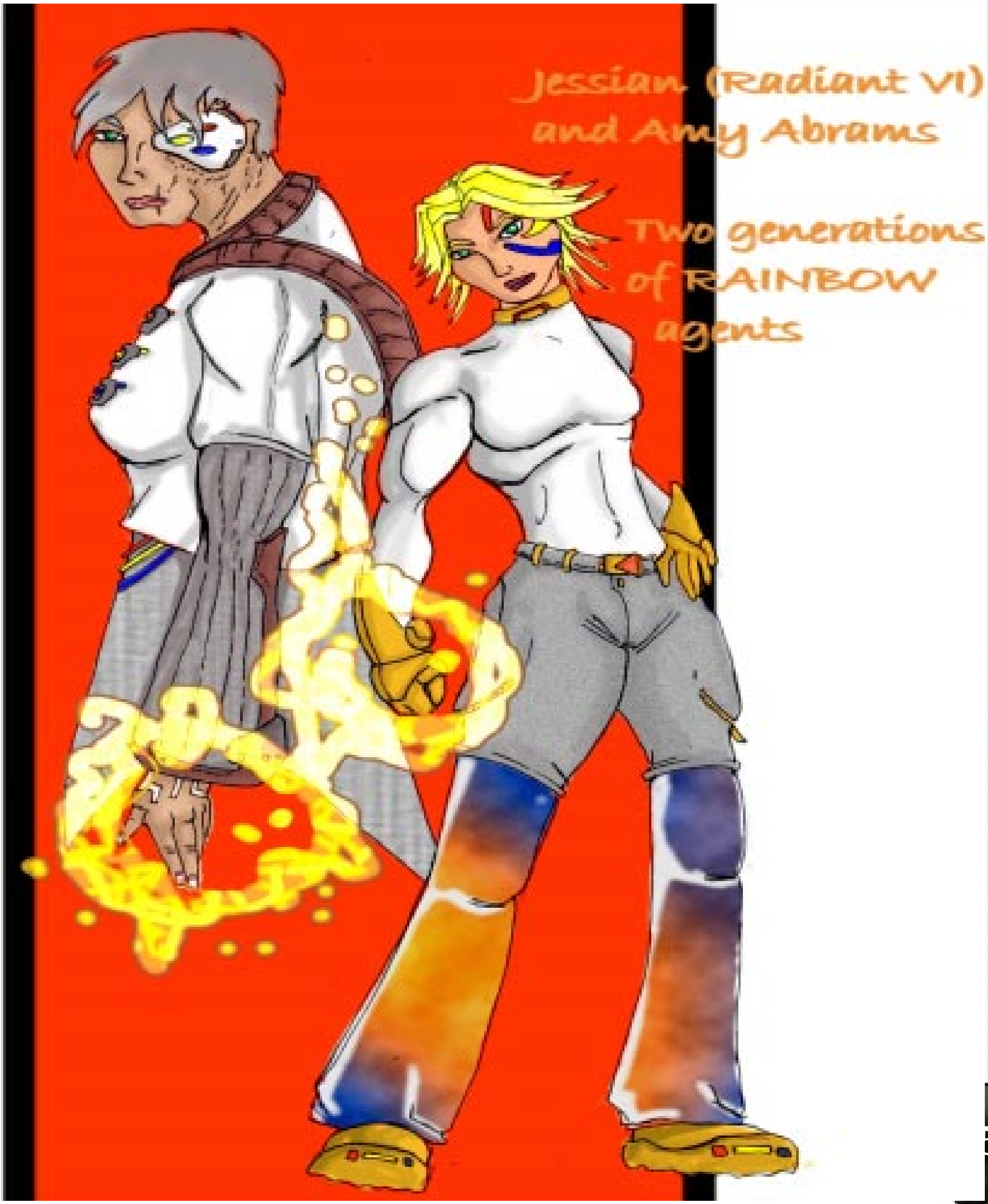
RAINBOW Liberty was formed for more than just survival; its founders wanted Americans of all political affiliations to see a heroic, highly motivated and superbly trained metahuman crisis response team composed mostly of gay and pagan members. The original members of RAINBOW were political exemplars and rolemodels, a necessary tonic to right-wing media depictions of their subcultures. The men and women of RAINBOW were also a not-so-silent threat, a cadre of ideologically motivated soldiers and rookie Combat Types who could respond to domestic terrorism in kind, and retaliate with deliberate and precise force.

RAINBOW provided the first impetus for young, liberal metahumans to gather together for a common political goal and for training. Most of the early 21st Century's liberal Powereds served at least a few months with RAINBOW Liberty, learning urban warfighting, political and memetic warfare and Choicer philosophy from senior 'combat volunteers' and their post-human clinic defenders. Early in its history RAINBOW Liberty was only more organized and barely more respected than grass roots pro-choice groups like Pink Wall, and in fact, membership was fluid between the various groups.

By 2061, when the War began, RAINBOW had been granted quasi-governmental status, and its members had the power to make arrests, wide authorization to purchase and field military weapons and gene-mods, and a limited ability to influence the course of the War. As veteran, experienced Powered soldiers, many of the 'old guard' of RAINBOW rose to prominence in the American and Choicer intelligence communities, and were able to shape the war from within the command structure.

RAINBOW suffered horrific losses during the latter years of the Abortion War,
and was officially disbanded after War's End. By the time of the organization's death, even many current and former members were glad to see it go. The once independent organization had been buried under Choicer red-tape and internal politics, many other groups had arisen to carry on its original mission, whilemorale was at an all time low.

As of 2107, only a handful of Powereds still wear RAINBOW's colorful unit patch, mostly former members who refuse to let their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their squaddies go un-remembered, and the metahuman children and grandchildren of first generation members. RAINBOW Liberty no longer officially exists, though its influence on history can't be marginalized or forgotten.


Jessian (Radiant VI) and Amy Abrams
Two generations of RAINBOW agents

Affiliation Prerequistes: Iron Will, Diplomacy 2 ranks Knowledge: tactics 2 ranks, Knowledge: streetwise 4 ranks, Membership in any race or class, or possession of feats that grant post-human abilities, any liberal, pro-choice or similar allegiance. Characters must have been active heroes between 2028-91, or be a descendant or trainee of a former RAINBOW Liberty member.

Affiliation Benefits: Membership in the disbanded, but famous unit gives former members a +2 bonus to their Reputation score. RAINBOW Liberty Powereds were among the best trained in America, and underwent an extensive training regimen that rivals APEX's boot camp. These Powereds learn to push their bodies and post-human gifts to the limit. Once per game session, a RAINBOW Powered gains a single additional use of any power or ability usable a specific number of times per day. This can represent a feat, class ability, or post-human racial ability. Powereds activating this ability are often crackle with prismatic, rainbow energy discharges or auras.

New Affiliation: Pink Wall
Official Designation: Pink Wall South Dakota / North America (civilian organization)
Formation Year: 2004

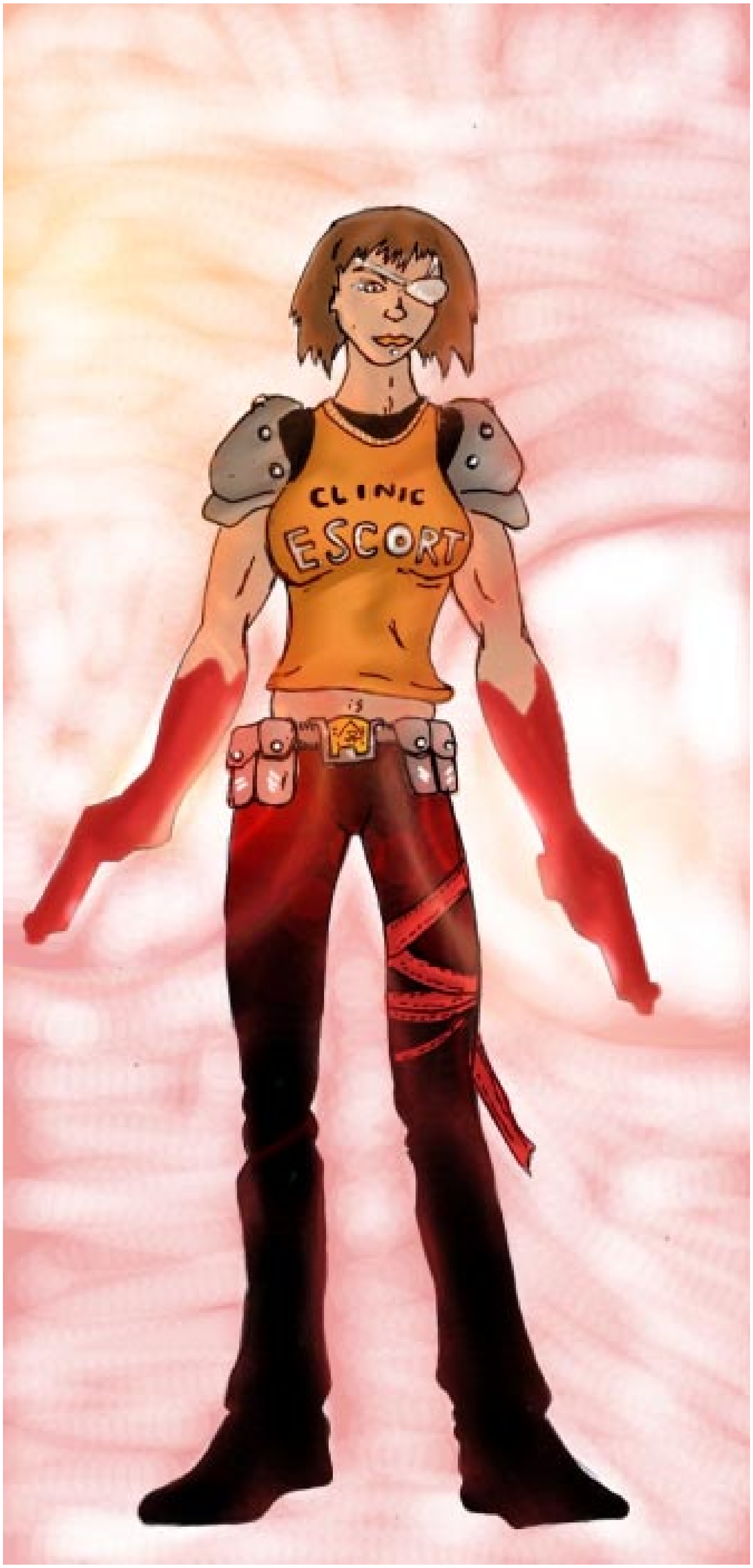
Pink Wall is one of the oldest continually active Choicer organizations, a unit composed entirely of volunteers, whose formation predates the War itself by nearly six decades. Pink Wall originally was a grass roots pro-choice organiztion, dedicated to protecting doctors and patients, and keeping the embattled abortion clinics in early 21st century South Dakota open and safe.

During the War, Pink Wall volunteers were incorporated into the Choicer movement, and Pink Wall trained-metahumans served as frontline clinic defenders. Even fully human Pink Wall-ers served as scouts, clinic guardians and as body guards for abortion providers and Neo-Witch theologians. Many other voluntary clinic defenders took the Pink Wall name, transforming a local pro-choice group into an important part of the Choicer movement's grassroots strategy.

Pink Wall remains active today. Individual chapters act as a neighborhood watch, protecting Choicer neighborhoods, particularly those trapped deep within 'the purple states'. Though Pink Wall no longer plays an active combat roll, its members are active in street demonstrations and parades, and are watchful for violence.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Knowledge: either streetwise, tactics or theology & philosophy 2 ranks , Spot 2 ranks, any pro-choice or similar allegiance

Affiliation Benefit: Pink Wall training has always emphasized situational awareness and survival should a clinic defense turn deadly. Pink Wall training gives the volunteer a +1 dodge bonus to Defense when fighting within 30 ft of another character with Pink Wall training as well as a +1 insight bonus on Initiative checks when within 30 ft of another Pink Waller.



The Tower

"After I moved out here, after..... I watched them put up that Tower. The first entirely metahuman 'scraper. Imagined by a Powered architect, erected by Powered crews working triple shifts, designed around engineering techniques made possible by studing Powered biology..... it went up in sixty three days. No cranes, no construction equipment, just them."

-Dr. Marlene Barron, 2061

Rhinehart Tower is one of the most recognizable landmarks in Earthspace, and has joined Aradia's Isle, the Golden Gate Bridge and the Transamerica Tower as one of San Francisco's iconic sights. Erected in 2027, the 164-story monolith instantly became one of the symbols of the "Powered Age", in addition to reclaiming the title of world's tallest building for America. The gleaming chrome and glass spire dwarfs the city's lower buildings, standing nearly twice again as tall as the next tallest structure.

The Tower is an impressively decorated structure, despite its clean lines and stark design. Gigantic pentagonal silver shields float in an endless, languid orbit around the Tower's central spire, held in place by multiple layers of magnetism. The 13 heroically proportioned shields depict bas-relief images of early metahumans and extremely stylized sigils which represent the Wiccan wheel of the year. Holographic advertisements crawl up and down the Tower's sleek outer hull, their images color-coordinated to match the day's changing light.

As of 2107, the Tower is a multi-function structure, practically a city in its own right. Thousands of San Francisco residents live and work in the tower. The first ten layers are given over to a massive shopping arcology, one of the largest shopping complexes in North America. The Tower's central mall includes the Rhinehart Heritage Center, a museum of early Powered history that is free of charge and open to the public. The mall's facilities are comprehensive, and include on-site medical facilities, several theaters, and even small Covenant chapels and even a sterile, sparsely attended Grave of the Unborn.

The next ninety floors are dedicated to corporate offices. Many of California's wealthiest companies have office space within the Tower. Floors 101 through 105 are given over to maintenance and logistical facilities, and the remaining floors are lavish apartment's for the city's ultra-wealthy. The maintenance floors act as a security buffer between the public and semi-public areas below and the private areas above.

As is to be expected, the Tower has a top-flight security service on sight, and their staff includes several mid-range Powereds and cyber-enhanced soldiers. Older combat veterans view a career with Rhinehart Tower to be a comfortable semi-retirement, while neophyte metahumans find the job a favorable (if usually dull) balance between risk and reward. The Tower's internal security forces are more concerned with theft-prevention and corporate espionage than personal protection, though members of the Woven Circle and other important pro-choice activists maintain apartments here. These VIPS usually provide their own protection, in the form of Covenguard defenders.

Doctor Marlene Barron and the First Generation

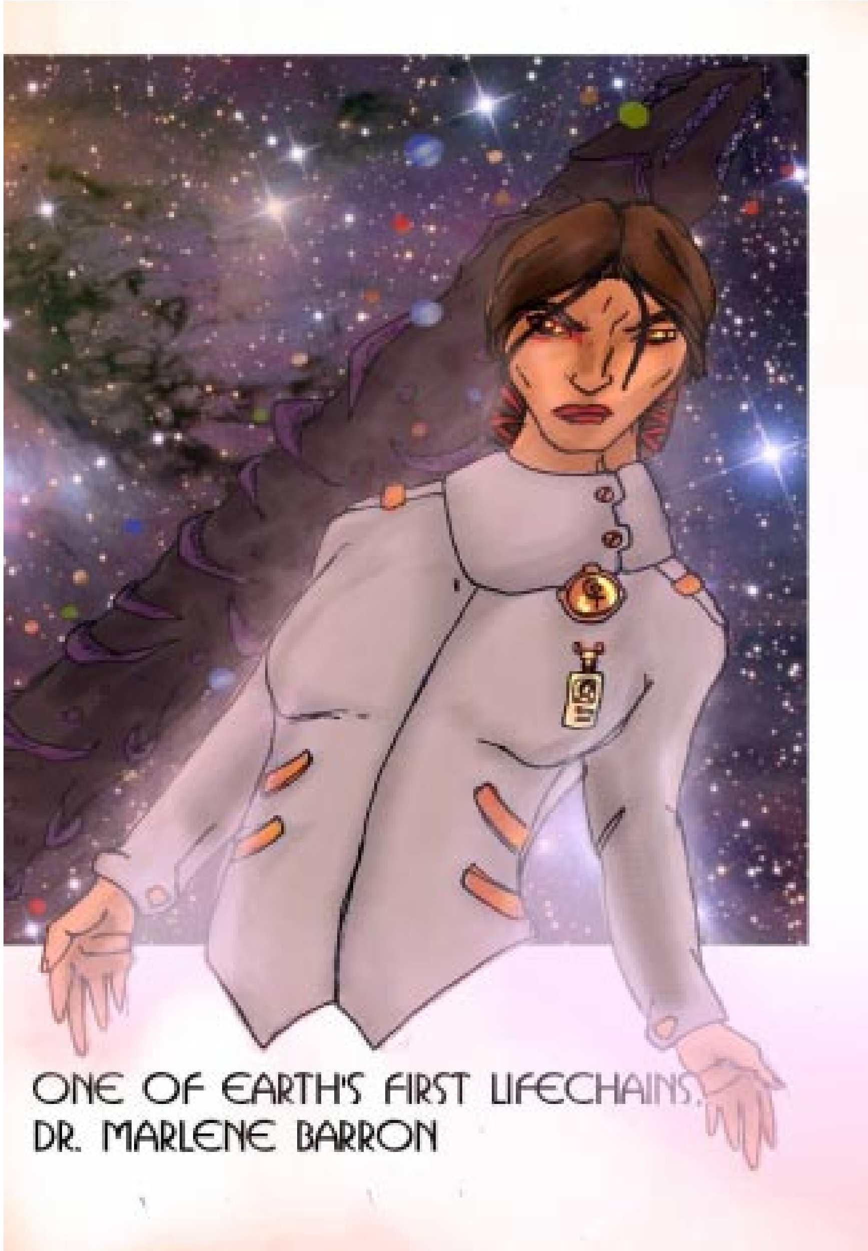
Earth's first definitive, recorded encounter with the star-spanning Lifechain occurred in late 1996, though very few humans recognized the event's true significance until more than three decades later. Dr. Marlene Barron, an abortion provider working on the Ogalada-Souix Reservation, South Dakota, was gunned down by a young anti-choice terrorist. Her heart stopped three times en route to the hospital, but somehow she survived.

Barron's near death experience granted the physician a nightmarish glimpse of the Lifechain (as described in the Dreams of the Core feat, in Guide to Known Galaxy). Emerging as the assault's lone survivor, Barron viewed her nascent precognitive talents as more of a curse than a gift. For many years, Dr. Barron refused to explore her psionic talents, or her even more spectacular but lesser abilities.

By the first decade of the 21st Century, Dr. Barron had returned to medical practice, this time in San Francisco, far from the clinic she almost died in. The presence of a Lifechained metahuman (however inexperienced or unwilling) in the city made San Francisco a mecca for the newly arriving Half-Grey immigrants. Many Half Grey were drawn to the city for reasons they couldn't themselves fully articulate, and their presence in the city lead, in turn to Dr. Barron learning to control her own Lifechained abilities.

The existence of the Lifechained doctor set into motion a chain of events that would eventually culminate in the Abortion War. She drew the Half Grey to the city, which drew the metahuman porn-corps to the city, who helped fund Rainbow LIBERTY, who helped build the Covenant's military, and so on. The first shot of the Abortion War was fired at the Unbowed Woman Health Center, the same clinic where Dr. Barron began her medical career (and gained her Powers).

Many historians, Dr. Barron among them, believe that her very existence skewed reality at a sub-quantum level, twisting politics and possibilities until the Abortion War became an inevitability. They fear that since 1996 or so, mainline reality has been subtly influenced by Barron's hopes, fears



ONE OF EARTH'S FIRST LIFECHAINS, DR. MARLENE BARRON and beliefs. The Lifer nation's Anti-Christ wears a human face, and it's often Dr. Marlene Barron's.

Barron was Earth's first recorded metahuman, though other Powereds burst into the public eye first. Police and post-trauma counseling transcripts connected with her case provide clear evidence of her knowledge of the Lifechain. However, highly classified American documents hint at the existence of minor Powereds more than a century before Barron's birth, and myths and legends imply the existence of occasional Lifechained mutate throughout human history.

Sex is Political

In four and a half long decades since the Abortion War began, the differences between Lifer and Choicer America have only deepened. Their attitudes towards sexuality, and towards the technology of the sexually transmitted future are as diametrically opposed as anything else about the two camps.

The Treaty of Boston

Noone in America actually likes the Treaty of Boston. The compromise that ended the Abortion War was just that- a compromise, not a decisive victory for any side. The Choicer and Lifer pseudonations had their existences enshrined in law, but each side was forced to acknowledge its rival's right to exist. Unaligned America received an end to the bloodshed, but at the cost of a huge portion of its sovereignty and territory. Each faction has good reasons to claim the Treaty favors their side, but each side also has some very valid grievances with the Treaty.

The Treaty has granted the Lifer and Choicer nations semi-sovereign status. Their citizens are still technically American citizens, subject to American law, and protected by the US Constitution. However, the federal government allows the pseudo-nations to administer their territory, in accordance with their own policies and traditions. The Choicer nation can legally maintain an standing army, and does. The Covenant of the Goddess Universal is one of the world's foremost military powers. The defeated Lifer nation can't legally maintain a standing army, but has its own internal police forces and similar authority figures.

Choicer and Lifer territory is usually off limit to local police forces. Unless there is an exigent circumstance, local governments are content to allow the pseudo-nations to handle city law enforcement, as they handle other civic matters. Federal law enforcement agencies, such as APEX and the FBI, are free to conduct investigations within a pseudo-nation. Such incursions are especially despised by the Lifers, who tend to view all fed-gov agents as Choicer collaborators at best, and Satanic agents of a corrupt, anti-Christian government at worst.

The Choicer Nation

Andi: “But what if this isn’t what ***I*** *want? What if* ***I*** *don’t want to live the way you live?”*
Miranda: “Oh, don’t be ridiculous Andrea. ***Everybody*** *wants* ***this****.* ***Everybody*** *wants to be* ***us****.”*
-The Devil Wears Prada, 2006, 20th Century Fox

Choicer America bears little resemblance to the mainline America which surrounds its borders, and the emotional, cultural and historical ties between the two countries fade a little bit more each year. The Choicer neighborhoods in American cities are strange, alien wonderlands, techno-pagan utopias proudly displaying a technology and culture deliberately different from both Lifer culture and pre-War America. Choicer America is another country, with its own faith and language, unique art and architecture, heroes, myths and celebrity dreams.

Less than 75 years after the official formation of the Covenant of the Goddess Universal, the neo-pagan society, and the Choicer nation as a whole, have done the seemingly impossible. The Covenant has grown from a small network of believers, a handful of scattered covens, to one of the largest and fastest growing faiths in North America. Even more, they have created a culture based completely around a new, non-Christian theology, a theology which shapes every facet of their culture. Tempered by 3 decades of civil war, the Choicer nation has emerged stronger for it. Forced to unite to survive, the Covenant has transformed itself into a world military and economic superpower.

The Choicer Pseudo-Nation

Also known as the
Covenant of the Goddess Universal

Progress Level: Mid PL Seven
Total Population (Earth): Approximately 320 million
Political Structure: Constitutional Monarchy, Single Chamber Legislature
Current Leader: High Priestess Emily Nicellos
Average Educational Level: Equivalent to 2-3 years of college
Percentage of the Population below the poverty line: 12-15 %
Percentage of the Population who are combat veterans: 23%
Percentage of the Population with a felony record: 6-8 %
Age of Consent: Varies between 13-15 depending on sect
Age of Majority: Sixteen
Metahuman to Human Ratio: 1 in 250
Major Cities: San Francisco, CA ; Seattle, WA ; New York, NY ; The Isle of Lesbos, Greek Isles; London, England
Major Out-Colonies: None; several minor out colonies.

The Basics: Choicer Government and Territory

The Choicer command structure and the Covenant of the Goddess Universal have become inextricably linked, like two vines growing in the same garden. Over the decades, the secular aspect of the pro-choice movement was pushed aside (subverted, voted out, or simply lost by attrition) in favor of feminist paganism. While the Lifers referred to their war on abortion as a crusade, Choicer activists began a crusade of their own: a divinely mandated call to protect the lives and reproductive freedom of all women, in the name of the many goddesses the movement worshipped. By 2107, the Choicer pseudo-nation has become a matrilineal theocracy in all but name.

While early covens were completely independent, each having its own bylaws and traditions, the Choicers have developed a more integrated, hierarchal government as their power has grown.

The day to day logistics of running a Choicer city are much the same as running a Lifer or unaligned American city. Elected mayors, city councils and civic officers are responsible for the mundane business of the city, from maintaining the infrastructure to providing, schools, hospitals and police service for the citizenry. Choicer politicians, many of whom are also religious leaders are active at all levels of government. In Choicer-dominated cities, young Choicer politicos have access to an unbeatable political machine, ensuring that city councils and school boards are strongly Choicer and proudly pagan. The Choicer nation learned the hard lessons taught by the early conservative ‘silent majority’ and knows the importance of grass roots movements.

Choicer neighborhoods are better maintained, more affluent than the Lifer districts. As the victors in the last war, the Choicers can pour massive amounts of resources into mundane infrastructure. Schools are better equipped, buildings are newer and cleaner, and more police walk the beats in Choicer neighborhoods. The subtle gifts of Choicer prosperity are used as a carrot to buy unaligned votes come election time.

The Choicer nation is every bit as religious as their adversaries in Lifer territory. Covenhouses, from small neighborhood chapels to grand cathedrals constructed of nano-steel and sheathed in luminous force domes, dot Choicer cities. Covenhouses are places of worship, community centers and the seat of local Choicer government. Priests and priestesses are often civic leaders, who serve the needs of their coven-steads *(an organizational unit similar to a voting district)*, as well as serving the political needs of the larger Neo-Witch Church.

Leadership of a coven-stead may be appointed by above, with clerics being appointed to a ‘duty station’ as a local political figure. Other covens are lead by priests chosen from among the laity of the coven-stead, or have the leadership of the coven passed through hereditary right., from parent to child. Regardless, individual coven leaders may be removed from office either by a vote of no-confidence or may be removed at the request of the larger Covenant.

Coven-steads are organized into city, state and regional grand covens, which act as local and regional legislatures. Individual priests and priestesses are voted into higher office through a series of regular elections. Grand covens serve and are directed by the Woven Circle, an elected body of 39 senior clerics, organized into three ranks of 13, who act as both Senate and Cabinet for the Choicer nation. Elections for the Woven Circle are held bi-annually upon the Winter Solstice, with 1/3 of the membership coming up for election at any given time. Members of the Woven Circle are voted into six year terms of office; no member may serve two consecutive terms, though returning to the Circle after a six year absence is common practice.

The Woven Circle advises and implements the proposals of the Covenant’s High Priestess. The High Priestess is elected by the members of the Woven Circle, and is chosen to serve a 13 year term. There is no constitutional limit on the number of terms a High Priestess may serve. Though nothing in the Covenants laws prevents the election of a High Priest, it’s unlikely the Woven Circle would

Aradia's Isle

ever elect a male to the position. No man has yet served as the Covenant's High Priest, and its unlikely one will ever be chosen in the foreseeable future. Non-pagans are not allowed to serve on the Woven Circle or ascend to the rank of High Priestess.

A High Priestess may be impeached for grave criminal offenses, crimes against humanity or general incompetence; though the procedures for impeachment are well documented, and occasionally threatened, the impeachment process has never been used to this point in Choicer history. If a High Priestess retires, is incapacitated or dies while in office, the Woven Circle's most senior member will serve as an interim replacement until a special election can be held at the next Winter Solstice.

The High Priestess and the Woven Circle guide the Choicer nation from Aradia's Isle, an artificial island rising from San Francisco Bay. Aradia's Isle is a center of learning and government, home to the political leaders and intellectual elite of Choicer society. The small island is crowded by universities, homes of the Choicer leadership, ritual spaces and temples.

"Araida was the product of the union, and was sent to earth as a prophet of the religion of witchcraft. Aradia's main following was…. among the oppressed, whom she extorted to fight against feudalism through the use of spells and poison."

- *Shahrukh Husain, The Goddess: An Illustrated Guide to the Divine Feminine*

Aradia's Isle is the Choicer capital city. It is an artificial island in San Francisco Harbor, roughly where Alcatraz Island sits today. Construction began on the island in 2044, when the nascent Covenant government purchased the ruined former prison from the federal government. Devastated in an earthquake a decade prior, the island had been written off by the US Parks Department and had fallen into disrepair. The Choicers were able to purchase the island at a relatively reasonable price.

Using a construction crew of high-level metahumans, operating under the instruction of some of the best architectural and ecological minds within the Covenant, the island was artificially extended far past its original size. Most of the original structures were razed, and rituals of purification and spiritual cleansing were performed. The ghosts of the prison were exorcised by the witches of the Covenant. What was once the nation's most iconic prison became a symbol of freedom for all humanity.

The island is named for Aradia, a militant pagan messiah-figure from European myth. The selection of a name for the new island was a long, arduous process, and remains a good example of the factionalism and brutal infighting common to Covenant politics. The choice of "Aradia's Isle" was a victory for the 'hereditary witchcraft' faction of the Covenant, who believe there is an unbroken line of spiritual succession from pre-Christian goddess worshipers to the Covenant neo-pagans. Many Gardnerian witches and their allies trace their pagan lineage back to Aradia's pre-Renaissance teachings.

As the capital of the Choicer nation, Aradia's Isle is one an extremely high security environment. The entire island can be surrounded by a massive 'mac-tik' force field at a moment's notice. Anti-missile particle beams and laser weapons protect the skies above Aradia, designed to react instantly the moment a missile or rouge Shell suit comes within firing range. In addition to the Bedchamber Guards and small Shell squads stationed on the Island itself, the Woven Circle is protected by a combat air patrol based out of Coronado Naval Air Station to the south. If all else fails, deep bunkers cut into the living bedrock of San Francisco Harbor are designed to withstand a direct hit from a 60 megaton warhead.

The Nicellos family, of mixed Greek and Italian heritage, whose bloodline follows the Strega's Path tradition has dominated Choicer government for decades. They are among the wealthiest, most influential Choicer clans. The current High Priestess, Lady Emily Nicellos, was first elected in 2092, and is in the early days of her second term of office as High Priestess. Unless something unexpected happens, she will likely be elected to a third term of office in 2118.

Prior to Emily Nicellos' rise to power, her mother, Lady Theya Nicellos served two terms as High Priestess, during the most violent and turbulent time in the Covenant's history. In turn, Emily is grooming her youngest daughter, Vespa Nicellos to assume the throne. Eleven year old Vespa Nicellos attends the prestigious Moonweaver Academy, and will receive her OB-Nan implants upon her first menstrual period, but is often allowed to accompany her mother on government business.

Lady Nicellos' older children play important roles in the Choicer military. Her oldest child, Hector Nicellos, serves as a senior Covenguard, and is one of the most respected soldiers in the Choicer nation. Lady Emily has used her media connections to ensure Hector's enshrinement as a military hero; if any male will ever ascend to the rank of High Priest it will likely be Lord Hector Nicellos. Lady Emily's middle children are priestesses, midwives and military commanders.

The Nicellos family is as fertile as any Lifer enclave; all of Lady Nicellos's six children are the products of the Beltane celebrations, and are considered to be fathered by the gods. Lady Nicellos has earned some controversy for choosing to bring her children to term in external wombs, rather than via natural childbirth, though not enough to hinder her rise to power. In fact, Nicellos is considered a trendsetter and champion for Choicer women who want to take advantage of this revolutionary new reproductive technology.

The major seat of Choicer Power is on the West Coast; the official borders of the Choicer nation extend from Washington state to the Baja Peninsula. The majority of the Western, Southern and Central US are Lifer or unaligned, following social patterns laid down during the first elections of the 21st century, with the 'red/blue' state divide becoming a purple/crimson divide. There are major Choicer enclaves in and around the Austin and New Orleans regions. Atlanta and New York have massive Choicer populations, which tend to be slightly more moderate since they forced by proximity to cooperate with their Lifer nemesis.

Their control over the Pacific Coast and their access to the Port of New Orleans give the Choicers a strong naval presence. Working in conjunction with the US Coast Guard and Navy, the Choicer military can project sea power effectively, despite the relatively small size of their Navy. Choicer flagged merchant ships are protected by allied Naval forces as they pull into US ports.

The major Choicer exports are agricultural products, from the fields and orchards of Southern California. The nation exports fine California wines, some of which are brewed and blessed by Aradia's Isle's vintners, as well as cybernetic components, particularly nanotechnology, and medical care. The Choicer-dominated lunar colonies produce extremely high quality cybersystems and medical components in microgravity labs. The Choicer mass media is the 22nd Century's dominant cultural force, and Choicer culture is effectively marketed to every corner of human-held space.

Within the Covenant

The Covenant is far from a monolithic faith; it is an umbrella organization tying dozens, possibly hundreds of small cults, million-member denominations, traditional, lineaged covens with membership rosters dating back centuries, and solitary practitioners. The single binding force which holds the Covenant together is that all the faithful consider themselves pro-choice, and all will work to defend that belief, though what either of those two statements means is open to wide interpretation.

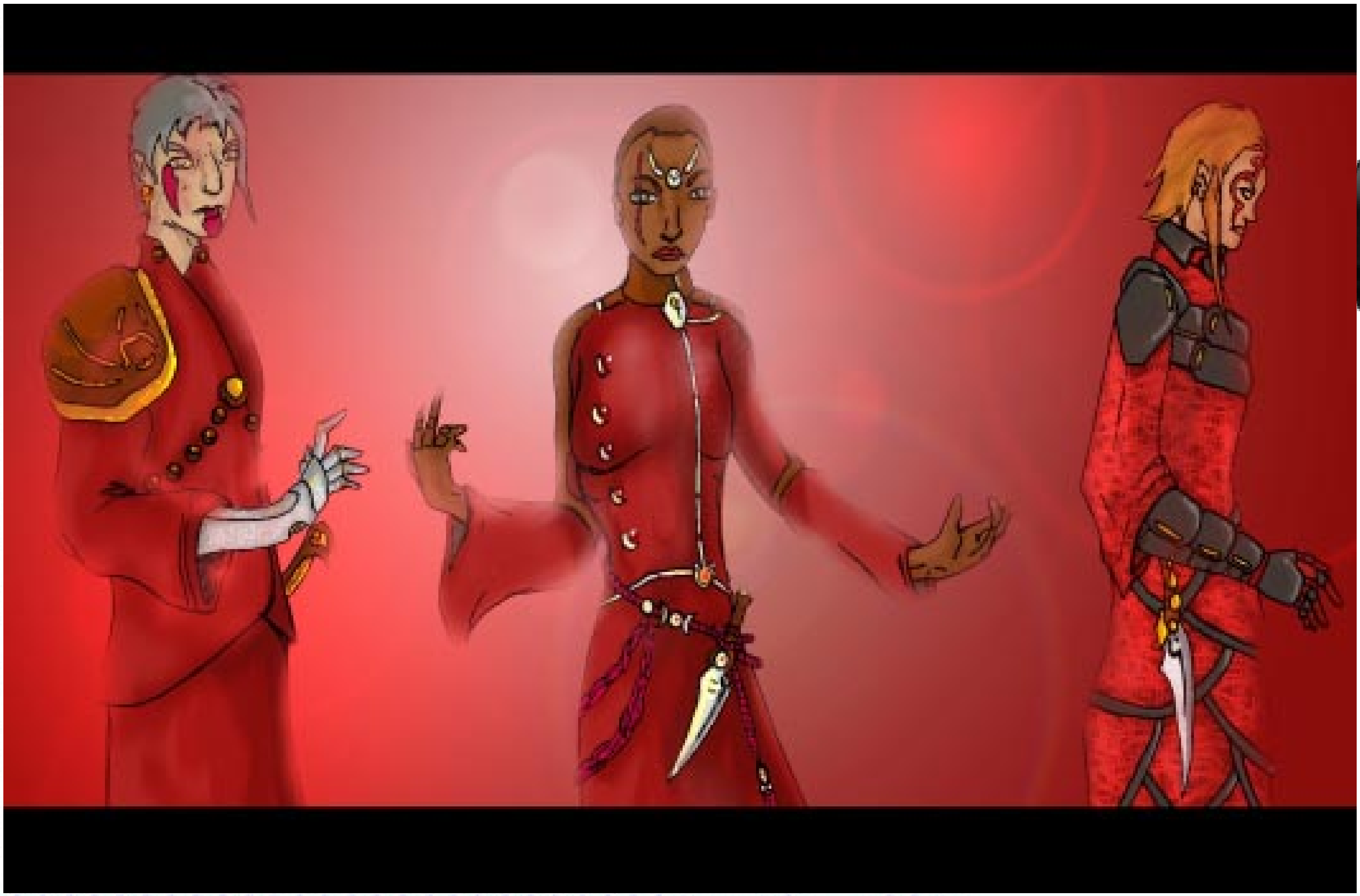
Political and religious infighting is brutal and omnipresent, usually confining itself to attack adds during the Yule elections and paper wars in theological journals, but occasionally spilling into violence, mutual espionage and even assassinations on rare occasions. Election time in the Covenant always makes good entertainment for political junkies. Some of the largest sects within the Covenant, and their beliefs are briefly described below.

Dianic Rite Wicca: The Dianic Rite tradition is the oldest in the Covenant, and the largest. In terms of sheer membership numbers, the Dianic Rite dwarfs the other faiths in the Covenant. The tradition is closest to the 21st century conception of Wicca, refusing to let the violence of the War corrupt its ideals.

The Dianic Rite is a female dominated traditions, coven leadership as well as most important ceremonies remaining closed to men. Young boys are allowed to worship at their mother's sides prior to their manhood rite, the better to understand and respect the Goddess, Whole Unto Herself. Mixed gender rites are seen as occasions for the normally segregated genders to come together in worship, with female priestesses taking the lead role.

Aside from their strongly feminist and matriarchal stance, the Dianic Rite is a moderate, relatively pacifistic voice within the Covenant. Dianic Rite believers understand the need for a strong military- especially given the hideous causalities the Rite suffered during the Abortion War- but would prefer to win their battles through education, compromise and negotiation, not military force. Dianic military contractors, including Valiente Armaments are at the forefront of constructing non-lethal weapons and incapacitating thought viruses.

It was a Dianic Priestess, Lady Sylvia Moondark, who taught the Covenant the psionic technique known as 'Geas of the Knot', as a way to bind captured Lifers to nonviolence without further killing. Lady Moondark now serves as one of the most respected voices on the Woven Circle, instantly recognizable in that she refused to have her Obstetrix Nanonics cyberarm replaced after a Lifer sniper blew it apart.



The goddesses Diana and Athena, as well as the archetype of the Triple Goddess are the most commonly worshipped by believers in this tradition, though many younger Dianic Wiccans have begun worshipping Commander Roe as an aspect of the grey-eyed goddess. Males are taught they are the consort of the Goddess, and that all women are to be venerated as the earthly incarnation of their divine wife, mother and queen.

Neo-Witch Midwives (and their Covenguard protectors) who are Dianic Rite do not wear the blood red cyber-arm of the other traditions. Instead, these wise-women have arms that are the cool grayish white of polished marble. Aside from the cosmetic differences Dianic cybernetics function identically to their mainstream Covenant counterparts.

Gardnerian Lineage Tradition: The Gardnerian Lineage traces its history back to the British theologian who created the modern form of the faith in 1954, and farther than that- to the witches and wise-women and adherents of the Old Faith nearly eradicated during the Burning Times. The Gardnerian Lineage Tradition has become one of the most strongly male dominated sect in the Covenant, with fathers teaching the traditions of the faith to their sons, as the tradition has done for centuries.

Gardnerian Lineage places more emphasis on family history, lineage and a hierarchical structure than many other faiths. New members of the tradition must me initiated by an existing, accredited High Priest or Priestess, and initiation must flow along sexual lines. A male can only initiate a female, or a woman a man, making the sect one of the least welcoming to gay or bisexual believers. Once initiated into the faith, a believer must undergo a succession of deeper initiations, with the deeper secrets of the faith and greater political influence and responsibility given with each new ceremony.

The Gardnerian Lineage Tradition has developed a semi-codified caste system, with hereditary witches- those whose parents and ancestors were a member of the faith- afforded slightly higher status than those who are first generation Gardnerians. Those who can trace their family's membership in the faith to the founding of the modern Witchcraft faith, or have a plausible family story of ancestral witchcraft have the greatest status of all.

Genealogy and history are popular obsessions within the Gardnerian community, as is politics. Sons are expected to succeed their fathers, taking over family business or political positions. Many of the Gardnerian Woven Circle members of 2107 are the sons and grandsons of the men who first held those same offices. Often criticized as elitist and snobbish, Gardnerian neo-pagans consider themselves the voice and memory of the movement, holding it true to its original roots, no matter how Christian society mutates around it. Gardnerians tend to be a strongly traditional, maintaining many of the ceremonial practices (such as the use of the besom) many of the other covens have long since abandoned.

More than perhaps any other sect, Gardnerian Lineage witches maintain an emotional connection and belief to the witch hunts of Europe and the witch hangings of Colonial America, historic atrocities they refer to as the Burning Times. These long ago witches are remembered at Samhain and Candlemas, honored as martyrs slain by an intolerant Christian faith.

Many Gardnerian witches weep for the death of a medieval midwife as reverently as they would for the death of a modern loved one. With the Abortion War looming in the collective imagination as a modern example of an anti-pagan pogrom, the Burning Times seem all too close and real to the Gardnerians. The phrase “Never Again” has become a watchword for Gardnerians, and their politicians are noted hawks, constantly siding with allies among the Bastians and other hardliners each time a new military budget is brought before the Woven Circle.

The Strega's Path: The Strega's Path is a mélange of Mediterranean flavored witchcraft, and is the patron faith of current High Priestess Nicellos. The Strega's Path blends elements of Hellenic worship with hereditary Italian and Romanian witchcraft. Above all else, it is a faith of the women's mysteries, and venerates the Goddess in her aspect as Crone- wise with the weight of years, clever, canny and determined, lethally competent thanks to a lifetime of study. Despite its high profile adherents, the Strega's Path remains a small, privately held faith.

New seekers are instructed in the women's mysteries only after being exhaustively, often cruelly tested for both knowledge, commitment and for sheer will power. More commonly, the secrets of the Strega's Path are never shared with outsiders and supplicants, but are passed down only from mother to daughter, and only then over the course of a lifetime. Males are never instructed in the faith, and are often pushed into another path: Gardnerian Lineage is especially popular, as are Hellenic sects, cults of Dyononsyous or Norse-inspired paths. The few (as in less than 5) men who have progressed in this religion live as women, many using genemods or surgery to actually become female, and all were the sons of respected strega of proud bloodlines.

The witches of the Strega's Path consider themselves apart from the community they serve, as wise women, oracles and stregas (mistresses of curses and hexes), and feel it is their somber duty to accept the responsibility of the darker aspects of their faith. The Strega's Path is one of the few Covenant traditions which allows its members to work dark magic or place curses upon enemies, and like the Bastians, members of the Strega's Path agree that it is taking a single life with a well done assassination is less of a violation of the Wiccan Rede than allowing that corrupt life to harm or kill others.

Likewise, Neo-Witch Midwives make up a far greater percentage of the Strega's Path population than it does among the Covenant as a whole. "The strega", believers explain, "have always been healers and midwives, and though the tools have changed, the need has not."

The Coven of Bast: Anger defines the Coven of Bast. The Coven of Bast worships the Egyptian Goddess Bast as a warrior goddess, a divine huntress who would (and does) die to protect her cubs, the mortal men and women who worship her. The Coven of Bast has become the almost-official faith of Choicer special operations groups, and many Choicer soldiers sacrifice at a Bastian altar before leaving on a deployment.

The Bastians have also become a dominant cultural force within the Covenant, and have pushed the development of the unique culture farther towards independence than many sociologists believed it could progress in so short a time. One of the central tenants of Bastian faith is that anything steeped in Western, Judeo-Christian tradition is fundamentally corrupt, the product of a faith designed specifically to kill them. As such, Bastians have rejected as much of mainstream America as they possibly can, developing a post-Christian, pagan society every bit as insular as anything found in a Megachurch Enclave.

The other major tenant of the Coven of Bast is the faith's interpretation of the Wiccian Rede (*And if it harm none, do as you will*) in what is often referred to as the *Measured Harm Doctrine.* While many neo-pagan traditions have had to compromise their beliefs when confronted with the realities of terrorism and warfare, the Bastians have completely rejected the notion that killing is necessarily immoral.

Allowing an obvious threat, such as a serial sexual predator or Lifer terrorist to live and harm others is far greater violation of the Rede than the swift, painless execution of the offender. Bastians are one of the few Neo-Witch factions favoring the death penalty for both civil and military crimes.

The Measured Harm Doctrine has shaped post-War Chocier military strategy, with many Bastian intelligence operatives and generals arguing that the Rede must be expanded to include the assassination of Lifer demagogues and public leaders, before they can rally terrorists to their cause. A handful of Bastian hardliners have argued that under the Measured Harm Doctrine, Christianity itself poses as great a threat to the Covenant as the

Lifer ethos, and the religion should be eradicated for the good of humanity.

Choicer Sexuality and Culture

The Choicer nation, and the Covenant faith which forms its backbone is a sexually open, tolerant society. Sexual freedom and diversity are tenants of the religion. Sequential monogamy, short passionate affairs are the norm. Relationships may be codified with a wedding ritual (handfasting) or may can be just a casual rendezvous. Virtually any consensual act of love between adults is permitted, so long as it harms none.

The notion of ‘harming none’ through action (or inaction) is a central tenant of Choicer philosophy and public life. Ideally, a Choicer believer should examine every action she takes, to make sure it really is harmless, not just seems that way on the surface.

Ideal Choicer relationships are clearly delineated, with both partners stating their goals and desires up front well before the relationship turns sexual, though reality rarely lives up to the ideals.

Choicer relationships are marked by elaborate codes of chivalry, etiquette and sexual gradualism. Tradition dictates prolonged courtships, with ever increasing levels of intimacy, both sexual and emotional; these long courtships can last months. Few Covenant clerics will handfast a couple without this prolonged courtship period. The sole exception being handfastings between combat troops scheduled to deploy; the Choicer military has lost enough troops to ensure that next of kin and new spouses can easily claim a fallen partner’s death benefits.

Choicer relationships follow the “Wheel of the Year”- the same ceremonial calendar that the Covenant faith uses. Many young Choicers begin a relationship on Beltane- an auspicious time for new lusts and new romances. After the unbridled hedonism of Beltane, the relationship alters, and true courtship begins. The Choicers believe in a strict hierarchy of sexual acts, with traditional intercourse being considered the most intimate act lovers can share. Other acts, while pleasurable, are considered less intimate, and occur earlier in the relationship. It is expected (though not always followed) that after a wild abandon of a Beltane coupling, that lovers will not engage in vaginal or penetrative sex until the next Beltane Rite, only returning to this deep intimacy after a year and a day of spiritual preparation and emotional bonding.

Choicer Homosexuality

Pure homosexuality (just like pure heterosexuality) have fallen out of fashion among the Choicer elite, who view the Bi-Shift gene-mod (and similar sex-tech) as the cornerstone of the third planetary sexual revolution. Many Choicer parents have their children gene-sculpted in utero with Bi-Shift, wanting their offspring to have the widest, best selection of potential mates later in life.

Some traditionalists within the Covenant reject the gene-mod, seeing it as diluting the duality of male and female energies that lies at the heart of Wiccan and Neo-Witch theology. Others, particularly the Choicer’s long-time and loyal allies within the gay community, see Bi-Shift as an erosion of their unique subculture. To their eyes the Choicer commitment to gay rights, once a corner stone of the movement, has fallen by the wayside. To many young and rebellious Choicers, rejecting their Bi-Shifted genetics (or undoing their genemods) and reasserting a single, unchanging sexual orientation is a symbol of defiance and independence.

Most Covenant sects welcome members of all orientations, though a handful of older and more traditional sects (especially the Gardnerian Lineage tradition) do not ordain gay and lesbian priests or priestesses, believing rites must be only preformed by a male and female pair.

Intangibles: Brown Skinned Future

Hispanics are the dominant racial group in America, and have been since the mid-2060s. However, a century of inter-marriage, cosmetic genetic engineering, and alien immigration means that racial homogeny is a thing of the past. Many of the children of the 22nd century blend the traits of a half dozen ethnic groups, plus designer mutations and over-the-counter nano-infections found nowhere in nature. Powereds and cyber-enhanced soldiers comprise a substantial minority of the human population, while most big cities are home to at least a token extra-terrestrial population.

A 22nd Century version of Hispanic culture has spread to, and had a profound influence on both Lifer and Choicer nations. The Lifer Hispanic population brings tension, both racial and social to both movements.

The traditionally Catholic Hispanic population forms a powerful voting bloc which counters the traditionally white Evangelical Christian core of the Lifer movement. Despite a common opposition to abortion, and a shared conservative streak, 22nd Century Hispanics haven't forgotten the anti-immigrant/anti-Mexican rhetoric and mass deportations of the early 21st Century, much of which was spear-headed by the conservative and Evangelical culture of the day. Old rivalries and ethnic tensions die hard. Lifer politicos must be acceptable to both white and Hispanic believers to have any hope of victory.

Among the Choicers, Hispanics bring a strong Central American paganism to the Covenant. Devotees of the dark Mayan goddess Xix Tab often side with hardline Bastian priestesses, while others worship the Virgin as a gentle, Choicer patron of motherhood and grace.

Spanish is as common as English. Official documents and Mesh-sites are accessible in both languages, while marketing displays beam information directly to the corneas of consumers in their preferred tongue. Most American citizens can speak and are literate in both English and Spanish as their native languages.

Hispanics have taken a dominating role in arts and entertainment. Mexico City, Buenos Ares and Havanna have joined Bollywood, Hollywood and Tokyo as the major cultural exporters of the 22nd Century. Americans of both pseudo-nations and every racial background have become just as addicted to telenovelas, futbol and lucha libre as they are to manga, rock n' roll, action movies and the NFL.

Choicer Family

Choicer parents are much the same as their Lifer counterparts. Parents on both side of the line attempt to pass down their history, imbue their children with a sense of pride and purpose, and prepare them for the day they will have to fight for their beliefs. The largest difference between a Lifer and Choicer family is the culture's views on child and teen sexuality, and on adolescence in general.

Choicer Neo-Witch Midwives begin their medical and theological training during elementary school, and are rushed through an accelerated training program that gives them the equivalent of a medical degree and surgical internship by the time they are seventeen. These gifted young women are held as the glowing symbol of the Choicer educational philosophy; they are a propaganda victory, showing the wonders a Choicer educational system can create. They are also a microcosm of the Choicer view of adolescence.

Choicers believe that their children are capable of rational, moral choices at an early age, and are much more capable of filling adult roles and responsibilities than most Lifers (or unaligned Americans) are willing to give them credit for. Education and spiritual development are intertwined; Choicer schools use a variety of advanced methods, from Mesh-based learning to psionic memory alteration, to ensure that the Choicer nation's kids are well prepared for life in the 22nd Century.

Choicer children are given a great degree of freedom, even as pre-schoolers. Choice defines the culture: school curriculums are student-designed, toys and games are designed to be interactive and infinitely customizable. Choicer children are allowed to experiment sexually with their peers at an early age, with parents seeing it as their duty to provide contraceptive tech and educate their children about the responsibilities of sexuality, not prevent teen romances. American law, post-Treaty of Boston, reflects the Choicer sexual philosophy: the age of consent has been reduced to 15 federally, and the age of majority has been reduced to 16, nationwide.

Rituals of Birth and Blood: Choicer Medicine

"Subconsciously motivated natural instincts /
Alter nature for the pleasure /Orthacycline
I flirt with conception, slow the cycle / will the baby grow?
Social traditions, interference / control, control, control."
-Gwen Stefani, _Six Feet Under_

Choicer medicine, especially nano-cybernetics, genetic engineering and gynecological care, is the best on the planet. As such, citizens of the Choicer nation, and unaligned Americans willing to visit Choicer hospitals, enjoy a relatively high standard of living. Few Choicer medics are strict secularists; the overwhelming majority of Choicer doctors and scientists are devout members of the Covenant of the Goddess Universal. Choicer doctors may use cutting edge surgical techniques and ultra-advanced technology, but are just as likely to embrace folk medicine, herbalism, magical healing (thanks to psi-based techniques called Object Philosophies, taught in every Choicer-ran medical school) and shamanistic and holistic medicine.

Non-pagan doctors, especially gynecologists and abortion providers, are a dying breed in Choicer society. It is a central tenant of Choicer doctrine that the unique medical needs of women should only be attended by other women. Over the years, male physicians, including combat medics who fought heroically for the Choicers during the War, found themselves cashiered out of the Choicer medical establishment.

The Covenant of the Goddess Universal has always offered medical care, and Covenant gyno-priestesses first accepted the responsibility (and the risk) of performing abortions and offering reproductive care during the mid-2030s. By the time the Abortion War erupted, the Covenant already had a long established tradition of 'women's temples' offering medical services. During the first months of the War, non-Covenant abortion clinics, especially those deep within Lifer held territory or operated by non-pagans, suffered far greater casualties than among the Covenant's own clinics and women's temples. Non-Covenant clinics simply lacked the resources, defenses and metahuman protectors their Covenant sisters enjoyed, making them more vulnerable, and thus, more attractive targets to Lifer terrorists.

Dr. Marlene Barron, an important voice in Choicer society since its inception, and one of the most strident voices in the non-Covenant pro-choice movement, has argued that non-Covenant clinics were left to fend for themselves as part of a deliberate plan to consolidate medical knowledge in the hands of Choicer priestess-midwives. Despite her importance to the movement and to human history, the near immortal physician has been pushed to the fringes of Choicer politics, leading to brutal factional infighting between Dr. Barron's loyalists and the Nicellos family.

A similar 'pushing aside' is happening today, but in a gentler, more subtle manner. Non-Covenant medical schools with extensive obstetric and gynecologic curriculums are rare, and medical schools willing to train doctors in performing abortions are virtually nonexistent. Lifer elements and conservatives within the mainline American government have all but eliminated federal funding for non-Covenant medical schools offering in depth OB/GYN curriculums.

Doctors wishing to learn these skills do so at Covenant medical academies, but are forced to compete for rare slots against Covenant citizens, who are granted preferential admittance. Neo-Witch Midwives are the new face of Choicer medicine: highly skilled priestess-healers trained from childhood in advanced medical and surgical techniques, tutored as theologians and community leaders, and marked by unique cybernetic implants. Few non-pagan medical students can compete with a cyber-enhanced surgeon who has been practicing medicine since her early teens.

Prior to the war, unaligned Americans visited Choicer women's temple to receive prenatal care or undergo an abortion in a serene, nonjudgmental environment, simply due to the excellence of care they received. Today, unaligned Americans, even some Lifers, receive medical care from Choicer medics simply because no alternative is available. If current trends continue, its expected that by the year 2200 C.E, reproductive care will be almost completely unknown outside of Covenant universities.

New Affiliation: The Moonweaver School
Official Designation: None (civilian organization)
Formation Year: 2095

The Moonweaver School opened its doors just a few years after War's End, its mandate to train the next generation of priestesses, neo-witch midwives and Choicer feminist-warriors. The school's inaugural class was composed exclusively of the daughters of the neo-pagan elite, and the children of Choicer military heroes, though today the school is open to any girl with an innate gift for medicine or philosophy, regardless of social rank.

The Moonweaver School is located in the Pacific Northwest, just a few hours from Seattle. The campus provides a home for students as young as seven years old, and provides education into the women's' late teens. The Moonweaver school incorporates a non-typical educational schedule. Most students graduate from the equivalent of their 'high school' curriculum while still a young teenager and many have acquired under-graduate degrees by the time they leave the school.

While there are several Choicer military academies and seminaries, Moonweaver School graduates have received a reputation for unmatched divine insight. Many of the most important young voices in the neo-pagan movement, and in Choicer politics as a whole, have studied at the school.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Female gender only. Knowledge: any two 4 ranks, Studious Must have selected one of the following starting occupations: academic, celebrity, creative, emergency services, religious, student.

Affiliation Benefit: Moonweaver lessons sharpen the mind and strengthen the spirit. Moonweaver School graduates receive a +1 bonus on WILL Save and a +2 competence bonus on any Perform check or Craft check of choice.

Starting Occupation: Neo-Witch Seeker

Your childhood was spent in service and apprenticeship, shadowing elder witches and techno-priestesses and learning the secrets of medicine, art, tactics, magick and cybernetics. You may never actually lead a coven or accept the burden of a priestess's nanonics- you may turn away from the Covenant Universal entirely later in life, but your early experiences among the Choicer intelligentsia give you a unique insight into their culture and beliefs.

Prerequisite: Age 16+ , any Choicer, pagan or similar allegiance

Preselected Feat: All Neo-Witch seekers are products of a comprehensive educational program, and by the time they graduate high school, many are the intellectual equals of mainstream American masters candidates. A Neo-Witch seeker must choose Educated as one of her starting feats at 1st level.

Skills: Choose three of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you recieve a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Computer Use, Concentration, Craft (pharmaceutical, visual arts), Diplomacy, Knowledge (any except popular culture), Perform (act, dance, sing, wind instruments), Treat Injury or select a new Speak or Read/Write Language selection

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Advanced Training, Animal Affinity, Anointed Cleric, Gearhead, Meaningful Ink, Personal Coda, Renown, Reproductive Care, Surgery. Alternatively, the character may select any Psionic Precursor or Choicer feat he or she meets the prerequistes for.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1

Reputation Bonus Increase: +0

Starting Occupation: Technopagan Oracle

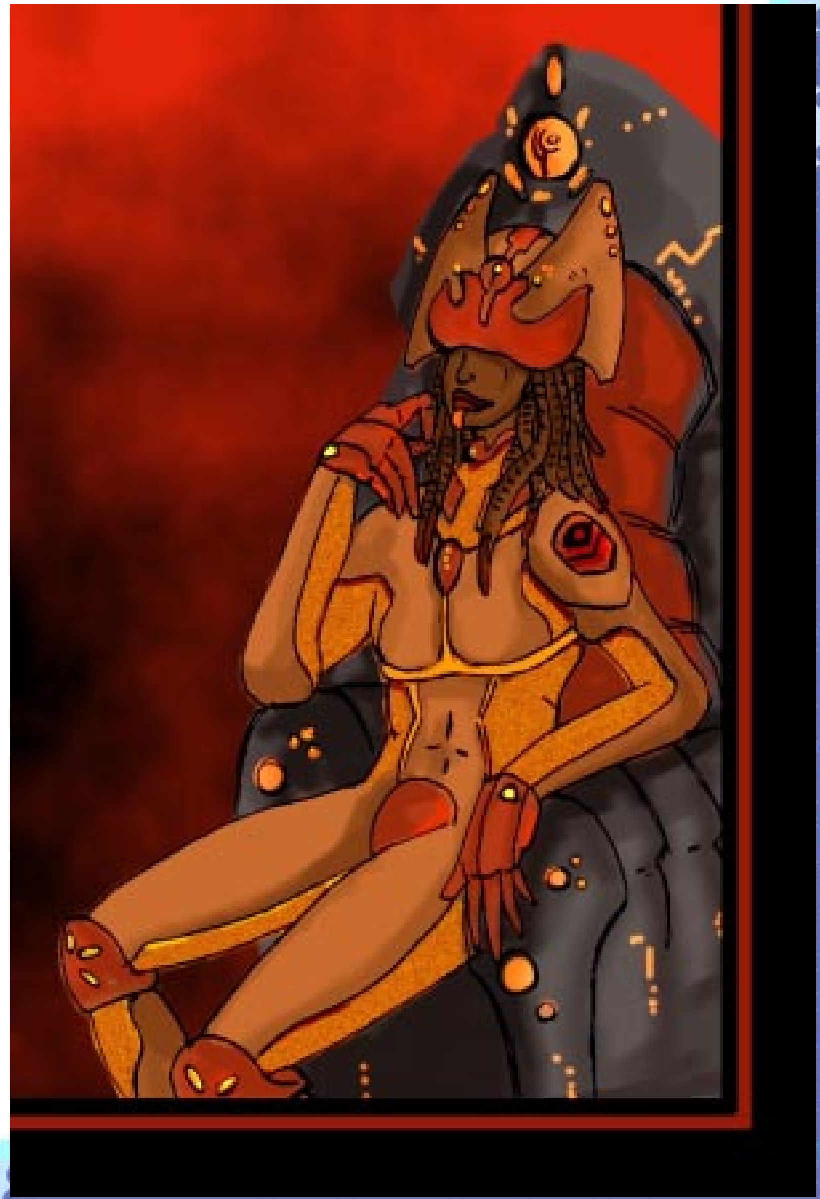
Ever since you were a child, you have been trained to find solutions: to interpret dreams by both oracular and psycho-interpretive methods, to read the Tarot, to enter a shamanistic trace, to deduce truth through science and reason, forensics and faith. You have been raised in a Covenant academy, among other gifted, insightful children, and taught to use your keen mind to its fullest potential.

You have been groomed for a leadership role within the great coven since before you could read, and tutored in a diverse array of subjects, all to make you a better leader and a more complete soul.

Prerequistes: Age 15+, any Choicer, pagan or similar allegiance, CHA 13+

Preselected Feat: Anointed Cleric

Skills: Choose three of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.



Computer Use, Craft (electronic, mechanical, visual arts, writing), Diplomacy, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Investigate, Knowledge (any), Profession (any white collar or leadership related), Sense Motive, Treat Injury

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Confident, Creative, Dodge, Evangelist, Focused, Iron Will, Meaningful Ink, Personal Coda, Psychologist, Reproductive Care, Universal Witch. Alternatively, the character may select any Psionic Precursor or Choicer feat he or she meets the prerequistes for.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1

The Sacrament of Blood: Choicer Medics

To reflect the important role that pagan tradition plays in Choicer medicine, Choicer aligned medics may add the Anointed Cleric, Evangelist, Faith Healing, and High Cleric feats (from Psi-Watch) to their bonus feat list.

Any Choicer aligned Smart or Dedicated Hero who serves as a medic or EMT, as well as members of the Field Medic or Abortion Provider (from Choice and Blood, LPJ Designs, 2007) advanced classes may add these feats as new bonus feat options. At the gamemaster's option, any other medical professional may select from these new advanced feats.

Choicer Sabbats and Ceremonies

Choicer Americans watch the fireworks displays and Shell fly-bys on July Fourth, and feast on Thanksgiving, just like anyone else in America, but the Choicer nation celebrates its own holidays and practices its own secret rituals. The traditions of the Choicer nation, most of which are modern recreations of pre-Christian rituals dating back millennia, shape the pseudo-nation and unify its diverse citizens.

Modern members of the Covenant celebrate traditional Wiccan and pagan holidays, as well as military holidays and remembrances based upon their war time experiences. Major personal milestones are celebrated among family and friends: births, deaths, ceremonies of adulthood and initiations are all remembered.

Samhain (October 31st): Samhain is celebrated at the same time as Halloween, the holiday it inspired. In contrast to the costumes and candy of mainstream society, the Covenant celebrates Samhain as a somber festival that remembers and honors the revered dead.

Samhain has become a highly politicized holiday among the Choicers. Those slain during the War are remembered, as are all witches throughout history who have died in the name of religious intolerance. Bastian politicians take the opportunity to push for a more aggressive stance towards Christian America and expansion of the Choicer military. Television and Mesh ads and Bastian blogs run short propaganda clips extolling the heroism of Choicer martyrs. Violence and street brawls between Bastians and Christians are common in the nights immediately after Samhain.

At sunset, Choicer cities go dark to celebrate Samhain. Homes and businesses turn off lights and electronics and are lit only by candles and ceremonial lanterns. From space, it is an eerie sight, as whole portions of cities go dark, and remain nearly lightless until sunrise the next morning. Only the cool blue light of the force domes lights Choicer cities.

Slow candlelight processions wind their way through the darkened, silent streets. Families and covens visit Covenant cemeteries to lay flowers and pour wine on the graves of the honored dead. Police and volunteer metahumans are deployed into the streets, keeping a close eye for everything from pickpockets working the night-shrouded crowd to Lifer suicide bombers.

After the processions, family and friends gather in private homes and sacred spaces, sharing food and wine. Pumpkin dishes, especially pumpkin pies and jack o' lanterns are a common part of Samhain gatherings, in half-remembered imitation of Christian Halloween traditions. Children are usually allowed a cup or two of wine at Samhain gatherings, and many traditions use hallucinogenic drugs and oracular object philosophies to allow believers to see and speak to the honored dead.

Yule (Winter Solstice, usually within a few days of December 20th): Covenant Yule is celebrated on the longest night of the year. It is a time for family and friends to gather, and is celebrated in much the same way as the larger American nation celebrates Christmas. Gifts and companionship are shared; Choicers spend just as much on travel and Yule shopping as their Christian counterparts.

The main difference between the two holidays is how the governments of the two nations respond to the holiday. While America's government effectively shuts down for the holiday season, Yule is one of the busiest nights of the year for Choicer politicans. Elections are held at Yule, emphasizing the importance the Covenant places on both family life and political activism.

At least part of each Yule night is celebrated outdoors, under the night sky. A short ceremony is usually celebrated at midnight, bringing a close to the old year and praying for blessings in the new. In keeping this tradition, the Covenant's current High Priestesses will address her pseudo-nation from a consecrated garden on Aradia's Isle, the Choicer capital city.

"You have studied with us for more than a year and a day. You have begun to help teach beginners. You came to us asking for initiation. Tonight, you have been reborn into the Craft, have lain upon the Earth and joined with deity, have seen the God in your own face and have spoken to the Goddess herself. You are now a priest in the Craft. In other religions, the postulant kneels while the priest towers above him. But in our tradition we are equals. I choose to kneel before you in respect, to welcome you."

-Wiccan rite of initiation, Kerr Cuhulain, Wiccan Warrior, 2000

On a more spiritual level, Yuletide coven gatherings celebrate the birth of the God, as child/ consort of the Goddess. Yule has evolved into one of the most masculine of neo-pagan ceremonies. Boys are presented with an atheme with their Yule gifts (and in many Choicer families, daughters are similarly honored), as a symbol of masculine power and chivalrous strength. Young male Choicers are charged to use their new athemes only for ritual or in defense of others. Many Choicer boys begin their studies of the unique Choicer combat martial arts (especially White Hand, Black Moon) after a Yule gift.

COMMANDER ROE ATHENE

Roe's Day (January 22nd): Roe's Day is not a traditional pagan holiday; it is a purely political, purely militaristic celebration. The holiday commemorates not only the original Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, but the eventual Choicer victory during the climactic Battle of Boston on this historic day. January 22nd is a day for parades, air shows, power armor and combat jet fly-bys. Metahumans take to the sky in organized displays of Choicer pride.

Security is tight across the country, with APEX and Choicer combat-types working in conjunction to ensure the celebrations proceed without violence. Travel restrictions, and increased surveillance of Lifer neighborhoods only escalates tensions, as do the pre-Roe raids on suspected terror cells. To the Lifers, not only is Roe Day a concrete reminder of their defeat, it is an annual pretext for an oppressive pagan government to crack down on Christian believers. Bombings, vandalism and violence, ranging from spontaneous street brawls to meticulously planned terror strikes are common.

Despite the very real threat of violence, streets are jammed with Choicer celebrants, thronging parades and block carnivals. As the Pacific Beanstalk nears completion, it has been incorporated into the annual celebrations: crimson, pink and gold smartlight displays, visible from space, are projected from the as yet incomplete crown of the mega-construct.

Candlemas (February 2nd): Like many neo-pagan holidays, the original intent of this ancient festival has been altered by 30 years of civil war. Candlemas in its purest form is a ceremony welcoming the warmth and new life of Spring, and will probably always be celebrated as such. In Celtic traditions, the day is sacred to the goddess Brigid, a warrior maiden and protector of her people. To American Neo-Witches, this association with Brigid has given the holiday new meaning: Candlemas has become a time to celebrate the principle of the female warrior.

Candlemas has become a kind of Choicer Memorial Day. The Choicer dead of the War are honored, regardless of gender. Graveside services and memorial ceremonies are common, following the ancient traditions of military funerals and annual references. Candlemas observances are one of only Covenant ceremonies that are celebrated with blood sacrifice.

In a tradition began by the Strega's Path sect, which has spread the length and breadth of Choicer society, Choicer women inflict a small cut and use their blood to anoint a grave marker Even normally non-militant Choicer women will spill their blood upon the graves of relatives who died during the war. The sacrifice is considered the somber duty of women, as a final gesture of nurturing and motherhood, and is designed to allow the dead to be reborn into a new mortal incarnation. As such, men are disallowed from making this sacrifice.

Girl children who wish to anoint the gravesite of a fallen family member or friend are allowed to do so, usually by making a small cut on a finger, not the forearm or breast as is traditional among adult women. Once a girl begins menstruating, if she chooses to practice the Candlemas sacrifice, she daubs a few drops of menstrual blood on the grave, rather than injuring herself, even in a token manner. This variant ritual usually ends when the girl is accepted as an adult, usually around 16-19 years of age.

Ostara (Spring Equinox, usually the week of March 20th): Ostara is a mid-spring festival, traditionally celebrated as a time when the God returns from the underworld of winter and reunites with his consort. Ostara and its antecedents have been a fertility festival since ancient times, and is still primarily celebrated as such. Newborns and young pagans, taking their first steps into the faith, are introduced to the community at Ostaran gatherings, and the month of March is considered an especially auspicious time for Choicer mothers-to-be to perform the Prayer of Awakening.

Choicer cities are decorated with symbols of fertility and life. Garlands of flowers, genetically engineered to survive for weeks after being plucked, decorate doorways and street lights. Stores and schools are decorated with traditional Easter symbols: cardboard and paper-mache rabbits, decorated eggs, reclaimed from the Christian tradition. Marriage vows, commercial partnerships and unit bonds are reaffirmed. Military reenlistment ceremonies, even if the actual reenlistment occurred months ago, are officially celebrated during Ostara.

Over the years, Ostara has taken on a new and surprisingly militaristic role. Ostara has always been a time of renewal; in olden days it was considered bad luck to wear new clothes before the holiday. Glamorous new outfits were unveiled at Spring celebrations. That tradition continues into the 22nd Century, and in recent years, Ostara has become one of the most important military holidays for the young Choicer nation.

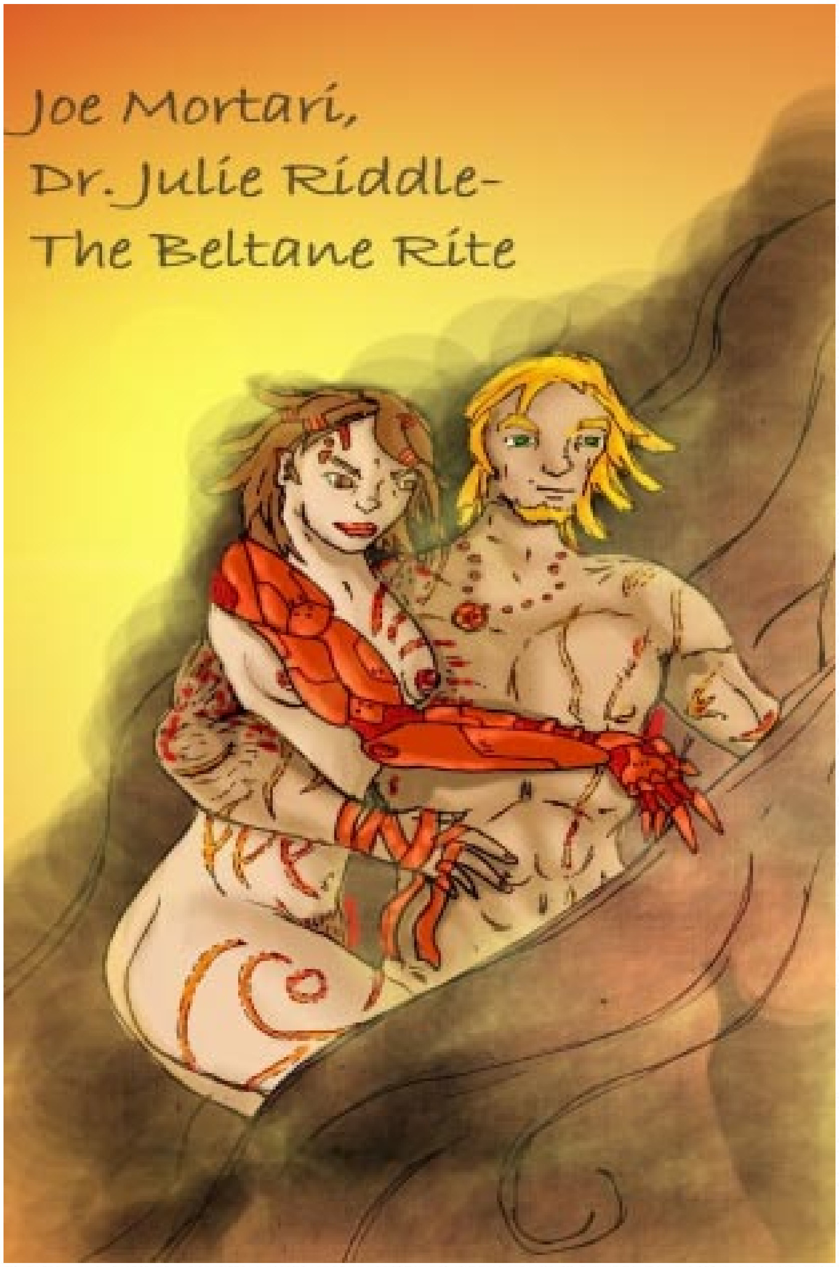
The Choicer nation provides its troops with their annual clothing and uniform allowances at the end of March, and troops are provided with scheduled upgrades around this time. New weapons systems and power armor designs are unveiled on Ostara, and the purchasing cycle for new defense contracts closes the week of Ostara. Military analysts (and stock market players) across the world have good reason to pay close attention to the Choicer military and its weapon systems towards the end of March.

The Beltane Rite (May 1st)

May 1st, 2105. Beltane Night.
San Francisco Bay.

Her name was Julie Riddle, and at seventeen she was either the older lover by a year, or else she was the younger by more than a decade. It all depended on how a lifetime's measure was taken. His name was Joseph, desperate to be called Joe, not Joey, and if the world had made sense, he would be tentatively approaching thirty now, instead he was sixteen years old. He'd lost a decade of life to a cryo-tank as his anatomy slowly knit itself back together, and his lean surfer's physique was still covered in a tapestry of scars.

The girl didn't mind, though. She had her own scars, everybody in their generation did. Unlike his, which were the abstract paintings of high velocity shrapnel, her scars were delicate traceries adorning her small, tight breasts and decorating her inner thighs like garters. Julie chose her scars, accepted them gladly as a symbol of who she was and what she believed in.



He'd only seen her scars a few times, mostly just tonight, but he already he knew he would never get tired of looking at them.

The two lay entwined on a tiny, narrow bed in a tiny narrow cabin on a tourist yacht. Even though Julie paid for the cabin, the small cubicle was all the two could afford, but it was all they needed. The cabin's walls displayed perfect-resolution video of the choppy bay and the fire-lit beacons on the artificial island at the center of that bay. The video feeds gave them the illusion that they floated alone on the black water, drifting slowly amid the fireflies and between the other yachts. The illusion was slightly spoiled by the music and the sex sounds and the laughter they could half-hear just outside their cabin's illusion-wrapped door.

They lay on their backs, watching the fireworks burst over San Francisco Bay, as Choicer air-interdiction shell suits rumbled overhead. Joe was still dazed, and he couldn't help keep glancing down at the girl next to him. In the years to come, he would forget the fireworks, the empathic thought-virals laced into the explosions with their message of pagan triumph, forget the shells, forget the Powered fly-overs, but he wouldn't forget this moment. How could he?

Out of all the men and women on the cruise, she'd chosen him as her consort. Maybe just for the night, maybe for longer. Tonight, the stunning brunette girl with the blood red bionic arm and the nose ring was the Goddess. She was the Sphinx, and she had shared her riddle with him.

And tonight, Joey Mortari, all 123 pounds of gawky, gangly and scarred muscle, with his scraggly, half-grown goatee, was the God. Tonight, he was Odysseus, solver of riddles. Maybe something more would grow out of tonight, maybe it wouldn't, but for tonight, bathed in the watery radiance of the golden fireworks, it didn't matter.

God and Goddess had found one another. They recognized each other by their scars.

Beltane is one of the most joyously and passionately celebrated of all Covenant holidays. To their enemies, Beltane is an excuse for mindless orgies and drunken hedonism. To Covenant adherents, Beltane is a celebration of the divine within everyone, an opportunity to celebrate the Great Rite, with all its attendant pleasures, both spiritual and carnal.

Beltane celebrations put ordinary life on pause; little work or commerce gets done anywhere in Choicer America on the first of May. The ceremonies of Beltane begin at sunrise when, weather permitting, an outdoor celebration is conducted to welcome the warmth and light of summer. Dance and feasting is celebrated throughout the day. Celebrants decorate themselves with nano-active body paint, bioluminescent temporary tattoos, as well as concealing their faces behind masks depicting various gods, goddesses and archetypes.

At sunset, the Beltane Fires are lit. Massive bonfires are raised on beaches or in desert gatherings. Colorful smartlight displays replace the massive bonfires in places where a fire would be unsafe or impractical. Adults and initiated, older teen members of the community celebrate the Great Rite in the flickering light from the bonfires.

Conservative members of the faith celebrate the union of Horned God and Goddess with ritual and ceremony; but substantial and ever-growing plurality celebrates the Great Rite through sexual communion. Sexual mores are relaxed almost completely; participants can choose any willing partner for either the night or a few hours of pleasure. With masks hiding their mundane identities, the human participants of the Rite are considered to be the living embodiments of the gods and goddesses the Covenant worships.

Children conceived on Beltane are considered the offspring of the gods, many Choicers, both single and married, attend the Beltane celebrations with the express purpose of conception. Children conceived on Beltane are often named for the holiday, for the month of May, or for the god-mask their father was wearing.

These orgiastic celebrations take place in sacred groves just outside mega-cities, inside urban coven houses and increasingly, aboard rented yachts in San Francisco harbor, where celebrants can enjoy the ritual within sight of the Choicer's artificially created holy isle. Covenant (and even non-pagan) leisure tour and cruise lines do brisk business on this sacred night. The Beltane fires are a tradition among every social strata of Covenant society. The current High Priestess of the Covenant, Lady Emily Nicellos, has conceived all six of her children at various Beltane rites over the years.

Some Beltane rituals are practiced openly, with no more concern for privacy than a closed coven house door. Others, particularly the Beltane celebrations of Choicer celebs, are protected behind opaque force fields and guarded by advanced signal suppression and EM jamming systems, to thwart the paparazzi's optical nano-cams.

Barred by American law and Choicer tradition from taking part in the true ritual, Choicer teens often engage in their own, secretive Beltane celebrations in abandoned buildings and unlocked classrooms. Older teens are allowed (or at least not completely forbidden from) their own Beltane celebrations, among their peers. One of the thorniest ethical issues for Choicer clergy is the question of how and when young pagans should be allowed to participate in adult rituals.

The Choicer Navy and US Coast Guard are on high alert during these celebrations, especially alert for infiltrators attempting to breach Aradia's Isle territorial waters under the guise of a pleasure cruise. The pleasures of deck duty on Beltane, a pair of binoculars or nightvision goggles in hand, have been a part of US Naval lore for as long as the celebrations have taken place.

Apollo Psi-Field (PL 7)

The Apollo Psi-Field uses electrical stimulation of the human brain, via an invisible field of psionically charged static to accomplish the same end as the airborne version of the Bi-Shift temp-mod. Like Bi-Shift, the Apollo field temporarily alters the sexual orientation of sentient creatures within its effective radius.

The field projector is a knee-high equipment pylon, often sculpted to be as sleek and decorative as a high end stereo system. A rainbow of glowing plasma displays run the length of the pylon and glow brightly when activated. The field projects a psionic energy field which can extend as far as a 100 ft radius, but is stopped by solid walls and obstructions.

Those within the energy field find their sexual orientation and unconscious attraction changing after only a few seconds of exposure.

Depending on the settings programmed into the machine, those caught within the field can be 'programmed' to be attracted to a specific gender, or programmed for artificial bisexuality. Once removed from the field, a creature returns to his or her 'default' sexual orientation within a few minutes. As with Bi-Shift, though a character's sexual orientation may have changed, their actions and wills remain their own.

In most jurisdictions, the use of the field is unrestricted, though the effective radius of the projection must be clearly marked. Rainbow colored stickers and warning smartlights are often used to let visitors know if a homeowner or nightclub has an active Apollo field on the premises. The Apollo projector is a common fixture of many Beltane revels

Additionally, ritualized homosexuality, chosen as a symbol of gender solidarity and fellowship has become a growing practice among neo-pagans. Males enter an Apollo Field to reaffirm their own strength and masculinity, while females enter the same fields for a sense of community and shared experience.

An Apollo Psi-Field is a Medium piece of equipment, weighing around 7 lbs. It has a base Purchase DC 15, and is considered Licensed (+1 Restriction Rating) in most jurisdictions. In Choicer-run communities it is a non-restricted item.

Midsummer (Summer Solstice, week of June 20th): Like Beltane, Midsummer is a joyful, mostly apolitical holiday. Unlike the somber Lammas or Candlemas rituals, Midsummer is a playful, almost frivolous holiday. In the days leading up to the Solstice colossal fertility poles, some explicitly carved and standing taller than archaic telephone towers, are erected in the central spaces of the Choicer districts. Intricately decorated paper lanterns and home-coded smartlights are hung from the poles, and burn bright in the three nights leading up to the Midsummer festival.

The Midsummer Festival itself is a day and a half long celebration, starting well before the Solstice officially occurs. The day itself is marked with dances, community potlucks and picnics, and the evening's festivities usually end with performances, either live or holographic, of William Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Midsummer celebrations are closely linked in the Choicer mind with the fairy world; adult and children alike will often don elaborate fairy or Renaissance influenced costumes. Temporary genemods and body decoration give mundane humans a chance to glow as brightly as any mythological fey or any modern day metahuman icon.

The Midsummer festival is one of the major divinatory occasions for the Covenant. Midsummer is considered a prime time for fortunetelling; everything from tactical precognition, using APEX trained psions, to Ouija board sessions held after family dinners. Choicer dominated media is alive with speculations, celebrity oracle readings, and gossip in the days before Midsummer.

Lammas (August 1st): Lammas is an ancient harvest festival, and is celebrated by modern techno-pagans as a symbol of closure and ending. Lammas is also an important agricultural festival, where Choicer California celebrates its booming agri-business industry. Hispanic Covenant members celebrate the holiday as a gesture of racial solidarity, commemorating their important contributions to the industry.

Lammas is celebrated with parades and street fairs. Food and music are enjoyed in abundance, particularly Mexican tunes and dishes. Vintners on Aradia's Isle will lay down new casks of wine on Lammas. Choicer children wind corn husks and dried grain and vines into their hair. While Lammas is a harvest festival during the bright sunlight, its nature as a festival of endings, of summer as well as old hurts becomes apparent as the sun sinks below the horizon.

Neo-Witch Pagans are encouraged to let go of destructive habits, old grudges and pain from the past. Problems are written on papyrus strips and set aflame, symbolizing the destruction of the past. More complex atonement rituals, fasts and periods of silence or solitude began with the Lammas sabat often continue until the Ingathering Sabat. Atonement and purification rituals vary wildly among different sects. During the War, Lammas was celebrated with prisoner exchanges, pardons and brief cease-fires. Very little actual combat happened on Lammas itself.

"I am the dead's latest experiment/ a midwife birthing afterlife/ the unborn are fully present/ we have disguised ourselves"

-Saul Williams, Said the Shotgun to the Head

Those Choicers still suffering from the guilt of an abortion or miscarriage are encouraged to create and than destroy a simple work of art commemorating the spirit of the child. Lammas is one of the few days where Lifer evangelicals are allowed to visit sacred Choicer spaces, or when a Choicer can be found at a Lifer Grave of the Unborn.

Lammas is a favorite holiday among pacifistic and moderate Choicers for this reason. Those who hope for a lasting peace between the two nations point to joint Lammas celebrations as an example of what can be accomplished.

The Ingathering (Autumn Equinox, usually on or about September 22nd): The Ingathering is considered the last holy day of the neo-pagan year, a time to reflect on the events of the past in preparation for Samhain. The Ingathering is a festival of thanksgiving, as well as an occasion for spiritual purification. Closure rituals, public ceremonies of atonement and forgiveness, many of which began with the Lammas sabat come to conclusion with the Ingathering.

American Neo-Witches celebrate the end of the annual period of deprivation and self-denial with elaborate feasts and dinners. Most Ingathering meals are vegan or vegetarian, even if the diners normally enjoy meat dishes. These meals are exactingly prepared, in traditional ways, with each part of the recipe steeped in pagan symbolism. Sweets and homebrewed beer are widely enjoyed. Many Covenant families keep a small closet beer-still or limited utility smart-forge in storage most of the year, and break it out in the weeks before the Ingathering to brew the ritual beer and honey-mead enjoyed during the celebration.

The Prayer of Awakening

Understanding the purpose and spirit of the Prayer of Awakening requires an understanding of the Covenant's (often) conflicted beliefs on the spiritual significance of the abortion act itself.

The Prayer of Awakening is one of the most personal and controversial Neo-Witch rituals. Unlike other ceremonies, it is a private conversation between a mother to be and the gods and goddesses she chooses. For some young mothers, the Prayer is a joyous public celebration, performed before her entire coven or the coven's women; for others it is a simple moment of reflection.

Each Covenant tradition has its own interpretation of how the human soul first forms, and the exact nature of a soul's journey through multiple incarnations. One thing that most traditions agree is that the human world is an ever changing mélange of old and new souls… reincarnated men and women who have lived and died multiple times and also new souls on their first human incarnation.

Like the Lifers, Covenant theologians believe that human life can begin in the womb, though not that it always does so. A mother's desire for a child, her expectations and dreams for that child's future, form a 'quantum base note', to borrow a common Choicer idiom. This quantum base note forms the basis for a gestating soul. Without this desire, without the consent of the mother, the soul does not truly form until the child is born, and begins collecting the experiences and memories which define a human consciousness.

The Ceremony of Awakening is a spiritual promise from mother to child that the new soul is desired or telling a reincarnated soul that he or she is a welcome visitor. Ways of marking this life-changing choice vary as wildly as the myriad traditions of the Covenant.

Hardline neo-witches, especially members of the Cult of Bast, publicly scorn the practice, as a residue of the same 'Christian abortion guilt' which has compromised the Lammas celebration. One of the central tenants of the Bastian faith that if a woman is called upon to kill, even to kill her own unwanted offspring, it is her right and duty to do so with the clear-eyed, unemotional purpose of a hunting cat. Some of the fiercest, most bitter sectarian struggles within the Covenant itself have begun over Lammas observances and the Prayer of Awakening.

This is the one issue which could conceivably drive a wedge between members of the embattled, young faith. Dozens of precognitive flashes, foreseen at separate intervals over the course of decades, predict several possible futures where the Bastians are a separate (and lethal) hardliner faith.

Choicer Sports and Celeb Culture

"Great ideas are based on the beautiful elaboration of fundamental principles."
-Melissa, I Love Bees.com Alternate Reality Game

Their high tech, neo-pagan culture doesn't exempt Choicer America from celebrity obsession.

More importantly, Choicer culture is one of America's dominant meme-factories; Choicer art, fashion and fiction is exported to every corner of human controlled space. Dreamscape and psionic thought-sharing had their origins in Choicer culture, and spread quickly to middle America and the Lifer nations.

Choicer movies and Mesh dramas may be officially taboo in Lifer districts, but bootleg data merchants do brisk business in selling pirated copies of big-budget Choicer blockbusters. Sneaking across the 'border' into Choicer neighborhoods to see a concert or watch a movie in a plush, full sensory theater is a rite of passage for Lifer teens. Near future Americans might be separated by politics and faith, but are still bound together by a shared pop culture.

Choicer films are usually light, fairly frivolous adventures, comedies and romantic dramas, not to mention some of the most inane musical comedies ever devised by man. Choicer entertainment looks towards the future; science fiction and speculation about deep space are common. Many Choicer films are based upon legends and incident reports from Stonecutter and Half-Grey star travelers. A handful of films include distorted, highly fictionalized accounts of Phallus Space and the Lifechain.

In almost every case, Choicer films are metaphors for coming of age, finding your own place in the world, and triumphing over an implacable, threatening parent figure wanting to control every aspect of the hero's life and thought. In short, Choicer novels and movies are metaphoric representations of the Covenant's real world history.

The Choicers are a militaristic culture, with a deep pride in their battlefield accomplishments and a fascination with the advanced weapons their soldiers wield. Documentaries of military campaigns, and biographies of military heroes and martyred priestesses are common. For most of the year, the focus of these documentaries is victory, technology and education. Battlefield tragedies and Lifer war-crimes are rarely the focus of the piece. This changes during the Candlemas festival (February 2nd), as hard-liner docu-dramas focusing on Lifer atrocities, heroic last stands and the horrible deaths some Choicer martyrs endured hit the Mesh.

Like the rest of America, the Covenant nation enjoys sports. Among Choicers, soccer is preferred to American-rules football. Basketball enjoys wide popularity, particularly matches televised from a low-gravity environment like Diana Station, where athletes can make jumps that dwarf 21st Century dunking records. Baseball is a popular pastime among friends and school teams, but as with the rest of America, the Choicers lost the taste for pro baseball decades ago.

Martial arts competitions are widely broadcast, and always get good ratings. White Hand, Black Moon matches, especially mixed competition between Choicer soldiers, Powereds and especially skilled civilians are incredibly popular. Traditional mixed martial arts and purely ceremonial forms are just as common, but draw slightly lower ratings than cyber-enhanced 'shoot fights'.

The spectacularly violent sport of "Orbital Sumo" first emerged among the Powered combat volunteer and clinic defenders which became the first Choicer army. Orbital Sumo had its genesis in the late 2050s, as a loosely affiliated league of bored young Powereds, full conversions and Combat Types. The brutal sport first began as a chance for these elite young soldiers to blow off steam, as well as a chance to build social contacts with other young post-humans.

Part endless rave, part combat sport and part dating scene, the Orbital Sumo scene attracted many of the toughest metahumans of the era. Orbital Sumo began with very few rules, no safety limits and no operational budget. Today, even with corporate sponsorship and the formation of the International Orbital Sumo League, things are only slightly more organized. The match is simple: two or three post-humans are launched from sub-orbital jets in high orbit; the entire goal of the match is to batter your opponent to submission by any means available before splashdown. Injuries were (and still are) common, but deaths are rare, owing more to the sheer toughness of the competitors and last second saves than any organized safety planning.

Many pre-War metahumans got their first taste of real combat during an Orbital Sumo match. Skills learned ‘in the ring’ made Orbital Sumos shockingly effective soldiers. Both the Lifers and Choicers recruited heavily from among Orbital Sumo competitors. The fledgling Choicer intelligence agencies felt the first stirrings of the War during the summer of 2059, when several Evangelical Christian and red-stater Powereds disappeared from the Orbital Sumo circuit, going underground to begin their combat training.

Starting Occupation: Orbital Sumo

Whether out of boredom or simply a desire to make some quick cash, you’ve done a few tours on the international Orbital Sumo circuit. You know what its like to drop out of high orbit locked in a grapple with another Sumo, and try to batter him into submission before you slashdown somewhere in the Indian ocean.

Prerequistes: Age 21+, STR 13+, CON 13+

Special: A prospective Orbital Sumo cannot be an unmodified human. The character must have the Psionic or Lifechained subtypes, be a member of an exceptionally durable player race, such as Stonecutters or Full Conversion Cyborgs or possess some other innate post-human abilities.

Skills: Choose one of the following as a permanent class skill. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Gamble, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (popular culture, streetwise, tactics), Perform (dance), Pilot, and Treat Injury

Bonus Feats: Select any one of the following feats: Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack

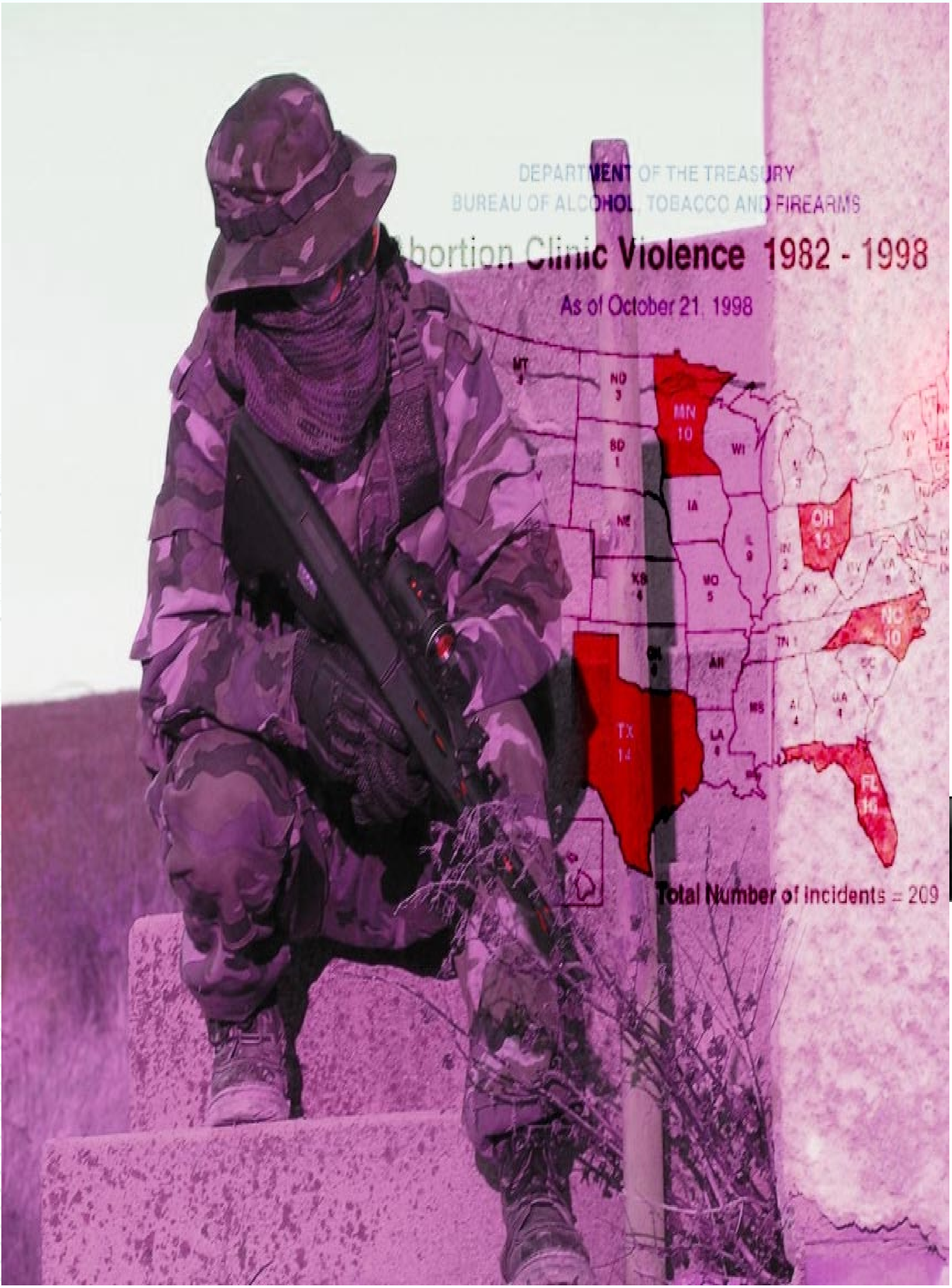
Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

Reputation Bonus Increase: +2

The gentler side of Choicer culture is reflected in the pseudonations’ love of dance. Many rituals are celebrated with public dances and athletic displays, virtually every adult within the Covenant knows how to dance the steps of the Beltane and Midsummer jigs.

Professional dances can become cultural heroes. The Covenant has pioneered a new form of dance, blending interpretive dance, traditional ballet and morphic nanotechnology. During performances, these shapeshifting dancers alter their form radically, becoming angelic figures carved from liquid metal. The Choicer-controlled Lunar colonies have pioneered a haunting new form of low-g ballet.

Nano-dance performances, reflecting the history and struggles of the movement have become a Roe’s Day tradition. Tickets to a Roe’s Day recital sell out months in advance, and admission to a celebrated performer’s dance can run into the thousands of dollars. Real-time Mesh-links allow Choicers who cannot attend the dances in person to enjoy this strange, new form of post-human art.


DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS
bortion Clinic Violence 1982 - 1998
As of October 21, 1998
MT
ND 3
MN 10
SD 1
WI
NE
IA
IL 9
OH 13
IN 2
PA
NY
KS 4
MO 5
KY
WV
VA 8
NC 10
TN 1
AR
SC 1
MS
AL 4
GA 4
TX 14
LA
FL
Total Number of Incidents = 209

Lifer Sexuality and Culture

The Lifer nation is defined by sexuality. Their quest, and the War they began, is tied intimately to human reproduction. In some ways, Lifer America, circa 2107 C.E. closely resembles the 21st Century Evangelical Christian subculture which birthed it. In other ways, Lifer culture has mutated into something that even the most faithful Christians of the last century would be hard pressed to recognize.

The Lifer Nation

"Do you believe in God, or do you love bullets?
Say yes, you pull the trigger."
-Flyleaf, Cassie

When you cross from the Choicer section of a city into the Lifer districts, you know it instantly. The holographic, animated nano-foil bumper stickers on the back of late model cars give it away. The battered minivans filled with overly fertile Lifer clans, and decorated with the silver fish and cross brand and Lifer sigil give it away. As the streets roll by, you catch sight of Lifer Block Mothers wearing safety vests, with assault rifles slung over their shoulders, standing vigil on the corners to make sure the neighborhood's children make it to school safely.

The city itself changes as the border between the two Americas is crossed. Instead of the fanciful, feminist-deco designs common among the Choicers, the buildings in the Lifer community look like buildings. Battered ones. They're brick, steel, polycarbonate and mortar. Corporate offices and Lifer run mega-chain grocery stores, baby shops and fertility porn kiosks look clean, crisp and new, but most of the other buildings are run down, graffiti covered, bullet scared. The Lifers lost the last war, and they're paying the economic price. Worse, they are reminded of their defeat every time they look around their cities and see nothing but fading murals and polished pawn shops.

The Lifer Pseudo Nation

Also known as the Lifer Army of God, A.O.G, and the Coalition For Life

Progress Level: Mid PL Seven
Total Population (Earth): Approximately 450 million
Political Structure: Corporate/Military Dictatorship
Current Leader: Fairfax Dacoveney, CEO of the Coalition For Life
Average Educational Level: Equivalent to high school graduate
Percentage of the Population below the poverty line: 23-25 %
Percentage of the Population who are combat veterans: 38%
Percentage of the Population with a felony record: 41%
Age of Consent: Eighteen
Age of Majority: Sixteen
Metahuman to Human Ratio: 1 in 210
Major Cities: Boston, MA ; Pensacola, FL
Major Out-Colonies: Solomon Station, Jupiter Orbit ; several smaller out colonies

The Basics: Lifer Government and Territory

"Back in the day when we were young
When everything was like a loaded gun,
Ready to go off at any minute,
And you know we're gonna win again."
-Puddle of Mud, Psycho

The war-era Lifer Army of God was officially disbanded at sunset on January 22, 2091, bringing three decades of War to a close. The modern Lifer pseudo-nation was born on that day, a compromise mandated by the hastily negotiated Treaty of Boston. With both militaries exhausted and both economies near collapse, the Treaty was a chance to end the destructive cycle of strike and counterstrike that the Abortion War had bogged down into during its last days.

The Lifer AOG was forced to acknowledge the Covenant's right to exist, and to grudgingly accept the legitimacy of the mainline American government. In exchange for laying down their arms, the majority of Lifer prisoners of war were released, except in the cases of known war criminals. A general amnesty was promulgated, allowing Lifer veterans to return to civilian life under tight conditions. Lifer soldiers are legally prohibited from owning weapons, working in certain industries which would give them access to advanced weapons, explosives or cyber systems. The only exceptions were Lifer war veterans allowed to serve as law enforcement in Lifer communities, and both American and Covenant authorities must approve these rare few.

Powered and cyber-converted Lifers are carefully monitored by the Choicers and federal government, and are subject to some of the most draconian restrictions ever placed upon a parolee. Even the merest threat of violence, including otherwise Constitutionally protected forms of protest, is enough to send a Powered Lifer vet to prison for life. Lifer Powereds, and their genetically superior children and grandchildren have their genome tested at least once a year, in search of newly emerged latent abilities or the evolution of existing genetic talents.

Knowing that the Lifer movement had become inextricably entwined with the Evangelical Christian ethos that birthed it, and that eradicating the Lifer mindset would require either the most brutal period of reeducation in human history, or an equally savage genocide, the Treaty was signed. While neither side was fully satisfied with the Treaty, both sides acknowledged that the flawed social contract was the last, best hope for peace. In exchange for agreeing to these restrictions, and for a sudden end to the violence, the Lifers were allowed to continue to exist, but as a subject nation, rather than a standing army.

The Lifers' commitment to evangelical Christianity, to spreading the Gospel by force if necessary, and to saving the preborn by any means necessary remained unchanged. Even in the wake of defeat, the soldiers of the Lifer AOG refused to surrender. They may have laid down their arms, but only with the intention of picking them up again, the first moment a viable opportunity to do so presented itself.

The Lifer AOG was disbanded. The Coalition for Life, the political arm of the Lifer movement was allowed to take command of the war-ravaged pseudo-nation. The CFL predated the Abortion War by decades, and was used as a 'cover organization' funding and organization of the wartime Lifer Army. Not wanting the massive financial responsibility of rebuilding destroyed Lifer districts or providing medical and psychological care to wounded Lifer Vets, the federal government eagerly accepted when the CFL stepped in to take over these rules.

Today, the Coalition for Life, and its director of operations, Fairfax Dacoveney govern the besieged pseudo-nation. The CFL controls the purse strings of the movement, rewarding War-era Lifers who paid their political dues with pensions and veterans subsidies, allocates funding to Lifer causes and political entities and directs lobbing and electoral efforts. Lifer political candidates and lawmakers must be vetted by the CFL, or face an uphill climb to power. While the Lifer Army itself may have fallen, the Coalition for Life has emerged from the flames more powerful, more influential and more untouchable than ever.

The Coalition for Life is both mainstream political party and state sponsor of terrorism. Choicer and American intel agencies have conclusively Lifer terror cells to individuals within the CFL, but unfortunately have not been able to bring down the organization as a whole. The Coalition is as insular and secretive as the Lifer nation itself, with individual members of a 'rescue' only being given the minimal amount of information necessary to accomplish the mission. Even senior CFL officers do not know all the movement's secrets. Nor do they want to. The Lifers know the twin principles of 'opsec' and 'need-to-know' better than anyone else on the planet.

The Coalition for Life secretly funds the current generation of Lifer terrorists, funneling weapons and funds through a series of dummy companies, international accounts and a nationwide network of sleeper agents. Stripped of their ability to openly fund and equip their Frontliners, the Lifer movement has had to revert to the covert, cellular networks which armed the original Army of God, at beginning of the 21st century.

Cut off from conventional supply lines and command and control, 2107's new Lifer Army have refined the urban terrorism techniques their predecessors perfected. Lifer shooters know where to go for aid, who in the Lifer neighborhoods are good intel sources, and who might be willing to provide a safe house.

Target intelligence and tactical commands are traded on Dreamscape servers, encoded in offshore sports-books or hidden within the pixels of porno images. Guns and power armor caches are buried in the wilderness, in more locations than the overburdened APEX or ATF can ever discover. Some of these caches date back to the height of the

War, while others were buried within hours of the cease-fire, as the last ‘official’ act of a Lifer soldier’s career. Caching guns for future use is almost as much a Lifer obsession as actually using them.

The Coalition for Life operates openly as a multinational corporation and lobbing organization. The current director of operations and CEO is Fairfax Dacoveney, who served as a Lifer electronic warfare officer during the Abortion War, who has governed the nation since War’s End. Prior to Fairfax Dacoveney, the organization was stewarded by his mother and the founder of the organization, Ellen Kristen Dacoveney. Fairfax was forced to assume command of the organization after his mother’s suicide at War’s End.

The CFL’s Director Ops serves at the pleasure of the movement’s board of directors, who are elected by a majority vote of senior stockholders. Vicious internal power struggles are common, and long service at the higher echelons of Lifer power requires a mix of genuine, zealous faith, political savvy and enough cunning to blackmail and subvert your political opponents to your own ends. Despite having to piece a shattered movement back together, and to give a defeated nation its pride back, Fairfax Dacoveney has been an effective, media savvy steward for the new generation of the Pro-Life movement. During the 2104 Election cycle, Dacoveney ran for the US Presidency as the Lifer candidate, and was only narrowly defeated by a mixed Choicer/Democrat ticket.

Boston has been the seat of Lifer power since the movement’s inception. The Coalition for Life owns a gleaming corporate tower in the heart of Boston’s storied Brookline district, just a few blocks where John Salvi murdered several abortion providers during the last days of the 20th Century. The building, known as One Eagle Plaza, is the capitol of the Lifer pseudonation, and is one of the most high security locations on the planet. Helicopter over flight, Powered guardians and conventional security provide an unbreakable ring of protection around the sky-spire.

The Lifer war dead are memorialized with a colossal black basalt cube, floating in slow revolution within a null gravity field. The memorial cube floats deep within a blast crater in the heart of old Boston, just a short walk from One Eagle Plaza. The Grave of Pro-life Heroes was constructed on the site of Commander Roe and Artemis’ final duel. The names of every Lifer soldier slain during the war, as well as an inscription memorializing the ‘murdered, unremembered unborn’ have been carved into the cube’s six sides. A memorial garden and plaza have been constructed around the Grave of Pro-life Heroes; day and night the Grave is a mecca for mournful Lifer veterans.

The Lifer nation controls most of the American Heartland and Bible Belt. The Lifer’s near total dominance over the state of Florida gives the pseudo-nation access to the sea. During the War, the Lifers used their command over the Great Lakes and Mississippi River to transport troops and material by water. Today, Lifers dominate the commercial shipping and bulk cargo industries, a legacy of their War-era supply trains.

Despite their access to the seas, the Lifer nation considers itself a landlocked, besieged country. This stance is partially a negotiating tactic, and partially part and parcel of the same belief structure indoctrinated into 21st century Evangelicals. This mindset argues there is an active ‘war on Christianity’ and that believers are a people under siege. Gaining preferential access to the nation’s ports has become as much a hot button issue for Lifer politicos as overturning *Roe vs Wade*.

Lifer space-lift companies, with the full support of the CFL have begun lobbing for the construction of a fifth orbital beanstalk, this one on the Great Lakes, to service middle America and Canada. Since this proposed beanstalk would be built closer to population centers than any beanstalk yet to date, and has been strongly opposed by an unlikely coalition of Choicer business-people, global security experts and environmental concerns. It’s doubtful the Lake Michigan Beanstalk will ever move past the drawing board stage.

The Lifer nation's primary exports are agricultural: oranges and citrus fruits from groves in purple Florida, genetically re-sculpted corn and grain from the central plains. Prevented from winning lucrative government and defense contracts, the Lifer controlled cybernetics and computing industry has stagnated, producing inferior goods purely for internal consumption, or covertly manufacturing war-tech. Cut off from the outside world, the Lifer nation is mired in poverty.

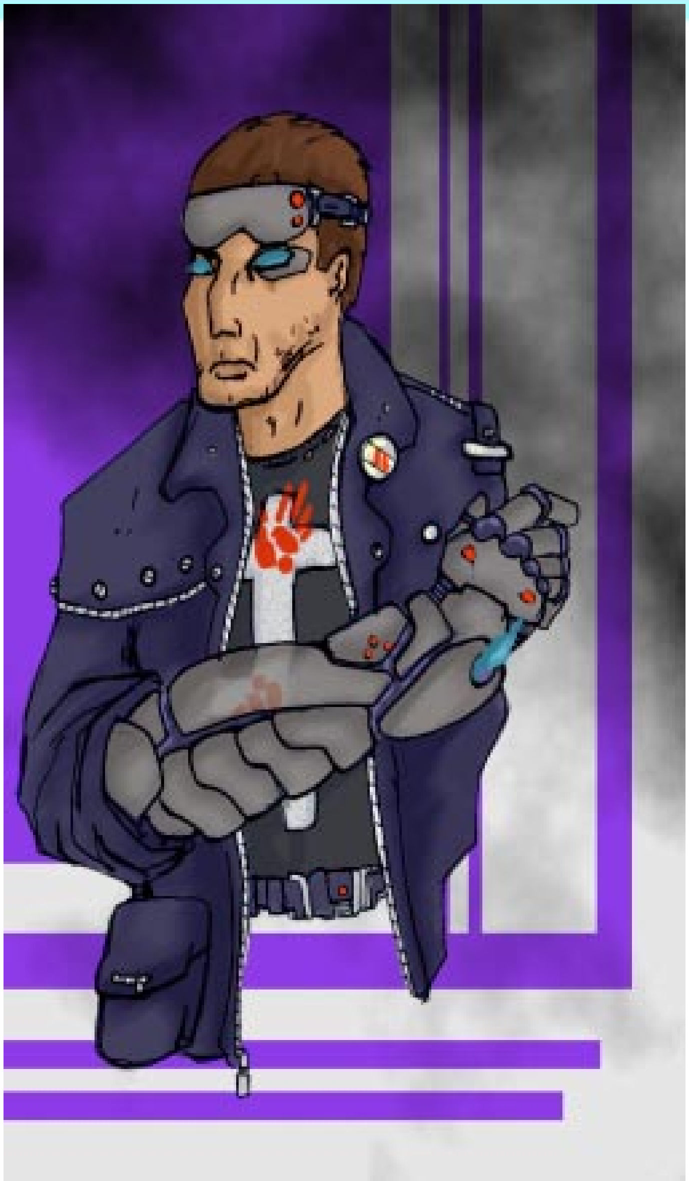
Since Lifer neighborhoods tend to be poorer, more populated and less educated than their Choicer counterparts, they have proven to be easy prey for the megacorps. The Lifer nation is a service oriented economy- performing the low wage grunt work necessary to keep America running and entertained. Visit any restaurant or shopping mall or access most American-based online call centers, you'll likely find a Lifer behind the counter. The fact that poor and middle class Lifers are forced to service the needs of wealthier Choicers while toiling for minimum wage has added class warfare to the list of reasons to kill.

A Separate America: Segregation by Choice

"Irene is such a wholehearted devotee of her church and its subculture that she isn't likely to know anyone else who might have been left behind. This points to one of the paradoxes of America's insular evangelical world. For evangelical Christians, evangelism — spreading their faith to nonbelievers — is an essential obligation. Yet evangelicals have constructed a comprehensive, separate, parallel world that virtually ensures they won't know any outsiders with whom they can share their faith.

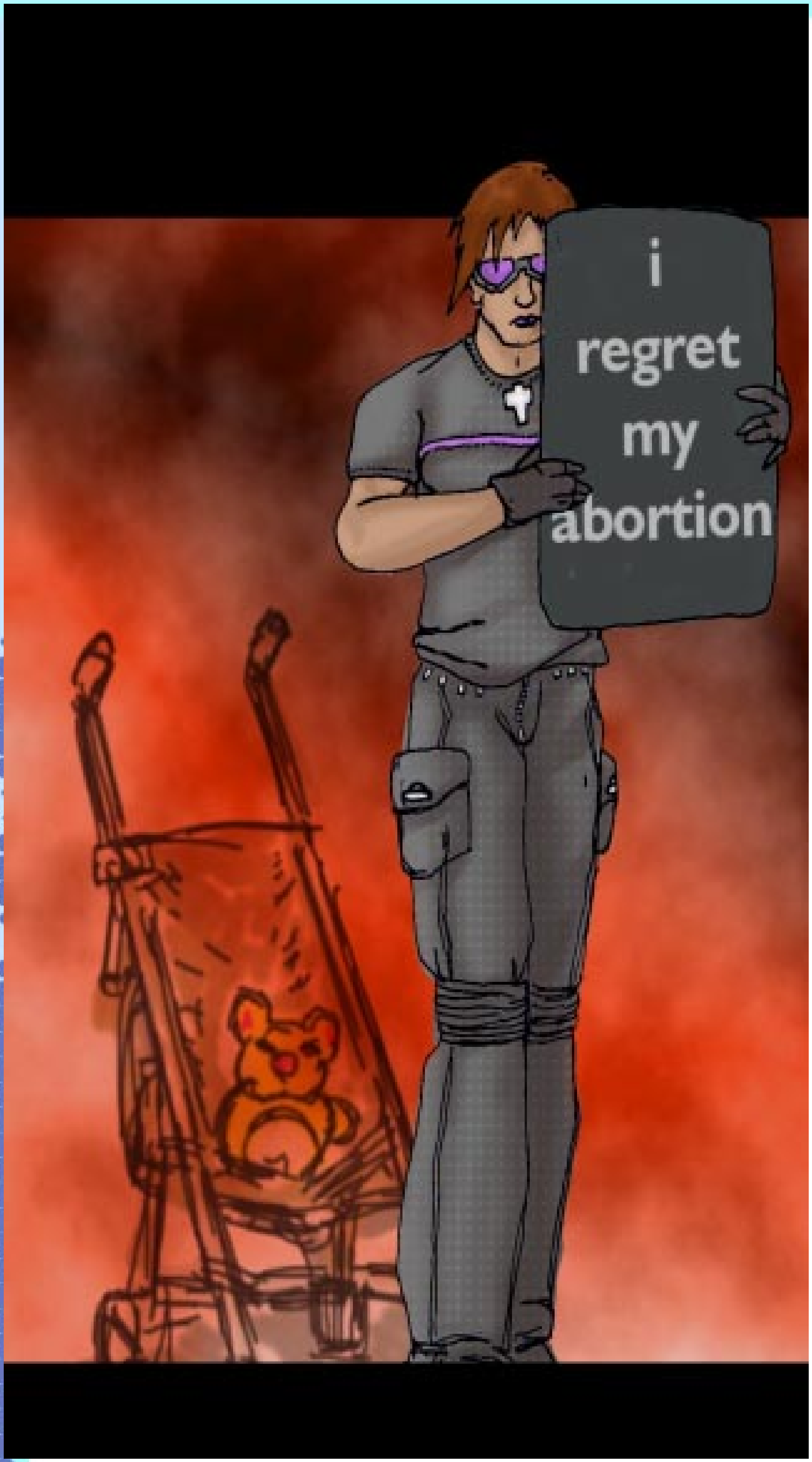
-Fred Clark, essays on the Left Behind Series, www.slacktivist.com

Ignored by the media, except when they commit a terror-strike, left behind by the megacorps, except when they need cheap McEmployees, under suspicion from every non-Lifer military on the planet, the citizens of Lifer America have been forced to build their own society in the ruins. The Lifer nation evolved naturally from Red State America, forming an insular society, a hyper-religious, ultra-conservative country within a country.



During the War, the Lifers besieged and enveloped entire cities, holding the civilian populace hostage, and instituting a theocratic military government. Choicer loyalists and metahumans were imprisoned or exiled to Choicer enclaves, while Neo-Witch Midwives and abortion doctors faced death at the hands of Lifer execution details or (at best) decades of imprisonment in a Lifer POW camp.

Today, Lifer district are marked by patterns of *de facto* segregation, and militant graffiti, not armed checkpoints. While Fed-Gov travel restrictions limit how when and where Lifer veterans can



cross into a Choicer neighborhood, Choicers and unaligneds can venture into a Lifer enclave. The fact that Choicers can invade what the Lifers consider ‘their cities’, while their own mobility is restricted is just one of many insults the Choosers and Fed-Gov impose on the Believers.

Despite the threat of violence, careful and respectful Choicers (with the notable exception of abortion providers) can and do conduct business among the enemy. They are, however, unwelcome visitors in hostile territory. Choicer-bashing, street violence and muggings are common, especially once night falls and the bars empty out.

Propaganda is everywhere in a Lifer district, a visible symbol of defiance, hope and fury. Smartlight murals drift through the smog-choked air, or crawl slowly and repetitively up the outer hull of chrome and glass office blocks. Holographic displays of horribly torn fetuses and slain Lifer commandos adorn street corners. Painted graffiti murals and billboards portray Lifer Shell pilots as national heroes, in a strong, iconic Socialist-Realist style.

Holofoil graffiti urges young and angry lifers to take ‘direct action’ against the Choicer occupational government. Storefronts, particularly the omnipresent *botanicas* and baby boutiques decorate their entry portals with neon signs and full rotation holograms of brightly lit gestating fetuses and smiling, cherubic babies.

Businesses proudly display their political affiliation and brandish their faith as if that was a badge of quality. Without a banner declaring the owner “COMMITTED PROLIFE or FULL PROLIFE”, the silver fish and cross of hardliner Christianity or a Lifer Sigil painted over the door, a business in a Lifer enclave is doomed to failure before its doors open for the first time.

Many Lifer businesses, particularly Lifer-run grocery chains like Three King Grocery, Kris-Mart and others, accept fund-transfers from a Coalition for Life managed benefits account. As part of their veteran’s benefits, many former Lifer soldiers are provided with free food and medicine, in a program similar to conventional Food Stamps or Veterans Administration benefits. The families of imprisoned terrorists receive similar benefits, for the duration of their ‘prisoner of conscience’ family member’s imprisonment.

Mammoth super-grocery stores are one of the symbols of urban Lifer culture. In addition to providing financial aid to Lifer veterans through these big-box retailers, Lifer controlled grocery stores also bring Choicer dollars into the community. With their deep connections to the agri-business industry, Lifer operated stores can provide fresher, cheaper goods than Choicer chain stores. Visiting the Lifer neighborhood to raid the grocery store may seem silly and unnecessarily risky, especially when trouble flares, but millions of value conscious Choicer shoppers pour into the stores each week. Grocery shopping remains one of the few occasions for peaceful interaction between the two factions.

The End Times Are Here

Choicer dollars are one of the only elements of outsider culture that the Lifer nation does not reject out of hand. To the Lifers, they are the last bastion of Bible-believing, genuine Christianity, a besieged people betrayed by their government, surrounded by pagans and child-killers and tempted by the wiles and sinful pop culture of a secular world.

Many Lifer factions believe they are living during the End Times or the Tribulation. Elaborate arguments have been written and are eagerly devoured by Lifer believers, linking various Choicer and Fed-Gov metahumans and celebrities the various villains in the Book of Revelations. The metaphors of Revelations are used to illuminate and explain the events of the day, everything from new technological developments, the emergence of new Choicer Combat-Types, to military victories and defeats.

With enemies, both real and imaginary encircling them, the Lifers have retreated deep into homogenous enclaves. The Twenty First century concept of a megachurch has expanded, with these colossal structures growing until they have encompassed entire city blocks. These massively fortified, and beautifully decorated megachurches include worship centers large enough to accommodate thousands of eager believers, shops, schools and gymnasiums and theaters. The largest include living space and apartments; the wealthiest members of Lifer society exist within a purely pro-life world. It’s possible for a sufficiently wealthy believer to go months, possibly years, without interacting meaningfully with anyone who does not share their beliefs.

Megachurch Enclaves are as alien and inaccessible a world as any extra-solar colony. These enclaves are completely closed to visitors; only known and trusted Lifers and their families are welcome within the enclave. Deliveries, logistics and maintenance duties are handled by Lifer businesses; police and federal investigators are only allowed in with properly sworn warrants, and even then can expect zero cooperation. The Enclaves are prime recruiting and training sites for Lifer terrorists, a place for Direct Action hardliners to train the next generation of rescuers away from prying Fed-Gov eyes.

Apocalypse Long Foretold

“All my friends are embryonic,
All my friends are dead and gone.”
-Hole, Gutless

Evangelical American, at the dawn of the 21st Century, were a people in search of signs and portents. Every news report, every war and rumor of war, every crisis and technological miracle, all were dissected, discussed, and measured, all in hopes of finding a clue to the culture’s burning questions: when is Jesus coming back? When will the Rapture finally happen? Are we living in the End Times?

One of the first signposts on the road to Revelations Time is supposed to be the Mark of the Beast, some kind of oath of allegiance to the Devil and Anti-Christ ‘without which no man could buy or sell’. Was a national ID card the Mark? Was DNA tagging or subdermal credit cards? When Nymphette and the Panacean Release were unveiled to the public, Christian America was suddenly deluged with potential new beast-marks. Each new concept seemed a slap in the face to the subculture, a mockery of their own ideals of sexual purity and chastity. As they did with the HPV Vaccine a few decades before, the Evangelicals responded the only way they knew how: They made Revelations a self fulfilling prophecy.

The nascent Lifer nation rejected the Panacean Release and its derivatives, retreating to self-segregated communities deep in 'red-state' America. Sprawling, 100,000 member strong megachurches became new neighborhoods, expanding their services and size until they were cities in their own right. The Covenant's gene-mods and utopian promises were rejected as an "assault on Christianity" and upon American morality. A genuine fear that the vaccines and emergent new technology would steal their souls, would signal a final, damnable surrender to the Anti-Christian Covenant, drove these early Lifers permanently out of the mainstream, and into their own Enclaves.

A sociological migration that had begun during the Reagan Administration was finally completed by the mid 2030s. Irrevocably locked into their status as outsiders, the young Lifer nation had fulfilled the Prophecy- they were no longer a social or economic force in Choicer America… or in Moderate America. They couldn't buy or sell there, because they lacked the commonality of experience that served as currency. So instead of trade, instead of negotiation…. the only path left to the Lifers was violence. At their best, they limited their violence to bullying, hate-driven politics.

At their worst….

More than 18 million Americans died during the Abortion War.

The Strange New Generations

"The Armas story and his pictures should be part of this program in every grade from at least sixth and repeated annually through to twelfth. Students will have a personal story of "Life Before Birth" that simply cannot be denied or forgotten."

-tactical advice from the Choir of Angels anti-abortion website, 2005.

A new breed of English is emerging in the fortified, Megachurch Enclaves, a uniquely pro-lifer dialect that's spoken quickly, cautiously. Blending military jargon, prison slang and terms unique to the pro-life movement, such as 'abortuary' or 'Raptured', used as a verb, this Lifer-flavored brand of English instantly betrays a speaker's political origins. Enclave education is the same strange, unbalanced mix of theology and real world fact taught in Lifer schools across the country.

Lifer children are taught what they need to survive in the 22nd Century- job skills, how to use a computer or Mesh link, basic math and literacy. However, the primary emphasis in a young Lifer's education is theology, not secular fact. Children can quote chapter and verse from the Bible or Closed, but are intentionally kept in the dark on the so many other things.

Unless he or she is lucky enough to have been exposed to mainline culture, a Lifer teenager in 2107 probably has no idea his parents began the War, and believes that the civil war began as a FedGov funded attempt to annihilate Christianity. A young Lifer soldier might know enough about genetics and combat gene-therapies to come to terms with his own metahuman enhancements, all the while knowing nothing about evolutionary theory or how genetic traits are passed during sexual reproduction.

Believers fight to save babies, without knowing much more than the rudiments of how babies are created. To a devout, insulated Lifer any contraception technology more advanced than rhythm or the withdrawal method is an alien and unwelcome concept, and even the least invasive forms of birth control are just another kind of abortion. It's in the Coalition for Life's interest to keep the street-level Lifer culture ignorant of such matters. Large families mean a swollen labor base and large pools of underemployed, angry teens to recruit soldiers from.

Even otherwise highly educated Lifers view their willful ignorance as a symbol of pure, simple faith and innocence. Virginity, both male and female, is prized and married heterosexual monogamy is the highest form of love two humans can share. Unlike their evangelical ancestors, the Lifers do not reject homosexual members out of hand, even allowing them to serve openly in the Lifer military. Gay and lesbian Lifers are second class citizens, unlikely to get the best jobs, make the most friends or be welcomed into the most exclusive Megachurch Enclaves, but no Lifer commander would ever reject a committed rescuer ready to die for the cause, no matter their personal peccadilloes.

Of course, no repressive society can keep its population ignorant forever. Mesh culture has broadened the Lifers' horizons. Lifer kids sneak out of their neighborhoods to catch Choicer concerts and movies, or buy bootlegged Dreamscape smart seeds. Crossing the DMZ to catch a full-sensory movie at a Choicer theater is a forbidden thrill for Lifer teens across the country. The smartlight revolution is so pervasive that Pro-Life Logic Boxes, designed to ensure young dreamers are at least exposed to pro-life ideals while playing with the pagans in Dreamscape, are omnipresent in every suburban Lifer home.

Due to the lack of quality gynecologic care and modern contraceptive technology, Lifer enclaves have surprisingly high rates of abortion. Crossing the lines in secret to procure an abortion at a Choicer run clinic is a hidden, shameful rite of passage in Lifer society. In some cases, direct exposure to the object of their fear and loathing builds a bridge of understanding between reluctant Lifer patient and Choicer medic. Unfortunately, more times than not, the opposite is true. The guilt and fear these Lifer women fear only hardens their attitudes towards the Choicer midwives who attend them, regardless of how compassionately they are treated.

Teen pregnancy rates in Lifer enclaves are the highest in any industrialized nation, and due to their sheer numbers carry little stigma. There's an old, bigoted joke which sums up Lifer culture nicely.

Question: "What do you call a 30 year old Lifer girl?"
Answer: "Grandma."

All Lifers, whether Powered or ordinary human, dream of full houses and a 'quiver full' of children. Lifer families are huge and close knit, with most young Lifers having their first child while still in their early teens. Motherhood is celebrated; young Lifer girls look forward to nursing their first baby as the final proof that she's no longer a child. In Lifer run elementary schools, students are encouraged to dream up names and heroic destinies for their children. Pregnancies (typically very easy and ending in the birth of a beatific mutli-racial newborn) are as common on Lifer television shows and kid's animation as it is on the streets of a Lifer city. Girl children lack any fear of the pain of childbirth, in most cases because they were genetically altered with the Birth

“Super Dolfie Loves Mommy”

“Super Dolfie Loves Mommy” is the highest rated, most successful Lifer-themed kid’s cartoon on the Mesh, breaking every conceivable previous rating and sales record by an order of magnitude. The award winning series is based loosely (very loosely), on the early adventures of Lifer metahuman Miriam “Dolfie” Black, a Lifer-aligned Innocent *(from the D7ACU line)* whose combat drones took the form of children’s dolls. Decorated multiple times for her courage under fire, Dolfie Black was equally respected by her Choicer adversaries for her genuine commitment to pacifism and use of minimum force. Unlike many War-era Lifers, Dolfie concentrated on saving the lives of innocents caught in the cross fire, and minimizing civilian casualties during her combat cell’s rescues.

Today in her early seventies, the grandmotherly combat-veteran has started a second career as a children’s entertainer. She writes, produces and stars in Super Dolfie Loves Mommy, providing the voice of the show’s CGI star.

Super Dolfie is targeted at much younger audience than traditional Lifer children’s fare, and lacks most of the propaganda common to the genre. Aside from urging viewers to “thank mommy for having me!” at the end of each episode, Super Dolfie has little content that would offend even the most sensitive Choicer. The show’s cast even includes “Lady Naomi and Billy”, cartoony versions of a Neo-Witch Midwife and her toddler son, who are portrayed as lovably flawed, and occasionally greedy, but not irredeemably evil. This inclusiveness has made the cartoon an unexpected cartoon hit, and Super Dolfie Loves Mommy is a pre-school staple, even in Choicer homes.

Pornography tailored at the Lifer market emphasizes conception (with the moment of fertilization invariably resulting in a screaming, joyous faked orgasm), exotic rendezvous between a Lifer man and his glowingly pregnant wife or mistress, and breast milk play.

The Lifer fashion industry has held pregnant women as the gold standard of beauty. Dresses and office suits are tailored to accentuate a woman’s breasts or the curve of her belly. Even among the most conservative Lifer Enclaves, the exposure of one breast doesn’t raise many eyebrows, though going fully topless is still taboo. Even an otherwise modest and conservative Lifer businesswoman might let one nipple peek out of a well tailored business suit, symbolizing her willingness and desire to be a mother. Like medieval princesses, modern, fashion conscious Lifer women bind and pad themselves to look more voluptuous or in imitation of pregnancy.

When a child arrives, whether to a 12-year-old middle school student after a night of fumbling while the parents are away, or to a 60-year-old Lifer matron with a dozen grown children and a host of grandchildren, it is welcomed. Young parents and newly married couples will often live with their own parents, sometimes maintaining separate residences and moving between the two homes for a few years until they can afford a stable home of their own. Lifer parents can count on their pseudo-nation to provide subsidies and financial aid to help them care for their brood; mothers who have given birth to five or more children are publicly honored, given discounts at many Lifer run stores, and are provided with higher pension rates.

Adoption and even informal trades of newborn children between close friends and family members are common and un-remarkable. Many Lifer neighborhoods are held together by complex webs of intermarriages, and adoption, both formal and casual. Lifer families will often temporarily adopt several children from neighboring families, raising them for a few weeks, before passing off all the assembled children to another close family, to enjoy a brief vacation from parenting.

Neighbors and Lifer block mothers keep a close eye on the community’s children. Some Enclaves raise the children communally, in separate dormitories, allowing the children to see their birth parents only occasionally. Powered children are almost invariably raised as wards of the Lifer state, their post human talents celebrated as gifts of the Holy Spirit and their destiny as future soldiers in the reborn Army of God assured.

Starting Occupation: Block Mother

"She laid down on the sidewalk/
she is somethin' simply beautiful."
- Puddle of Mudd, *Psycho*

Pregnant Block Mothers carrying submachine guns slung over their bulging bellies are a common sight in Lifer neighborhoods. These warrior-women are the first line of defense against Choicer and Fed-Gov incursions and raids: they are visible symbols of Lifer strength and resistance, charged with protecting their homes and families against outsiders.

Block Mothers walk patrol with other Lifer women, noting anything coming to their districts and instantly assessing the threat it represents. They are also teachers and breeders- responsible for birthing and educating the next generation of Lifer children.

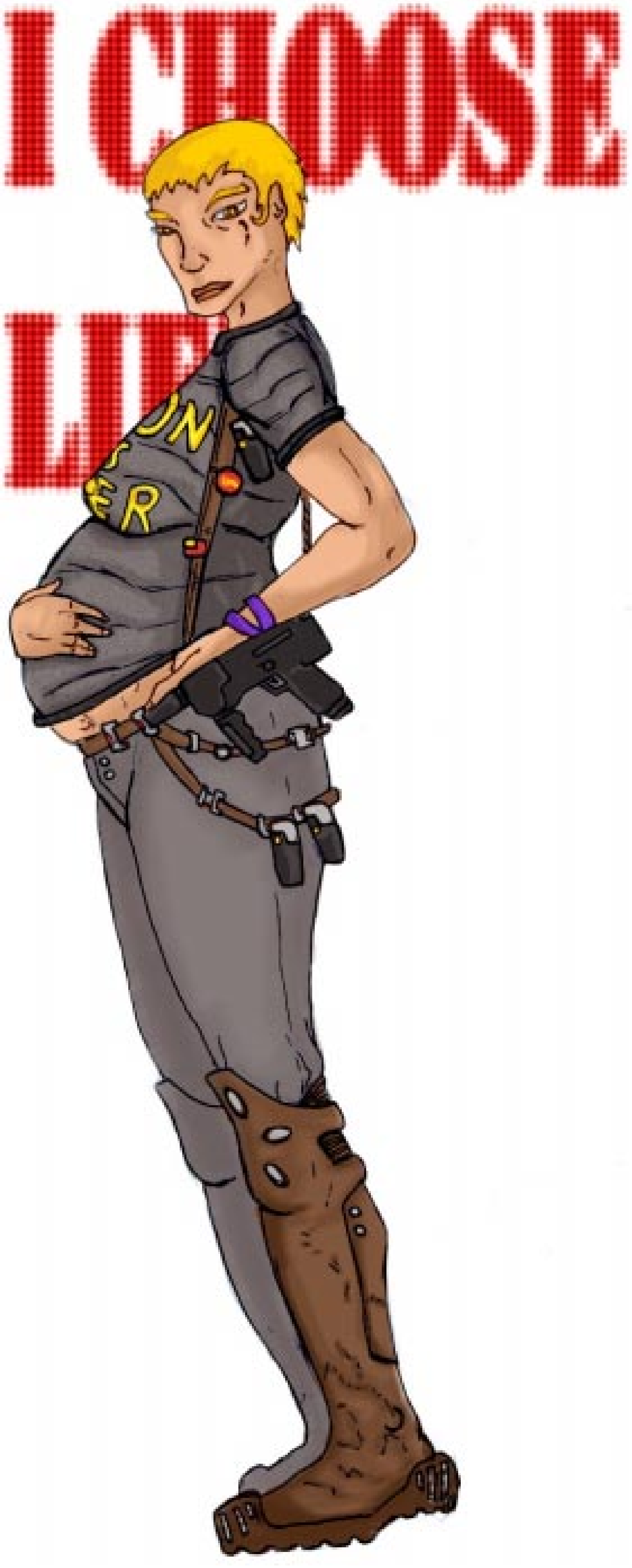
Prerequistes: Age 17+, any Lifer or similar allegiance.

Special: Only females can become Lifer Block Mothers.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Drive, Gather Information, Knowledge (current events, streetwise, tactics or theology & philosophy), Listen, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, Treat Injury

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Armor Proficiency (light), Improved Initiative, Meaningful Ink, Personal Coda, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Trustworthy. Alternatively, the character can select any Lifer feat



for which she meets the prerequistes.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

Reputation Bonus Increase: +2

New Affiliation: Virginia Dare Mommies

Official Designation: The Army of God, Virginia Dare Chapter

Formation Year: January 22nd, 2073

Motto: "Teach the Little Ones Well"

The Virginia Dare Mommies are not a military unit- rather they are a sort of women's auxiliary to the Lifer movement, honored by the civilian Lifer government for doing their duty to the movement: namely, bearing the next generation of soldiers. Established with great fanfare, exactly "one century after the killing began", referring to legalized abortion, the Virginia Dare Mommies was incorporated with great fanfare and wide coverage by Lifer-dominated media outlets.

Lifer mothers who had given birth to five or more children were honored with membership in the Virginia Dare chapter, and rewarded colorful medals, window decals and bumper stickers presented by local Lifer leadership and veterans. "Mommies" are accorded a kind of respect within the movement, and are often sought for advice by young Lifer girls on everything from romance and childrearing to how-to instructions on converting a Tec-9 for full autofire. More importantly, discount cards and CFL subsidies were issued, to allow "Mommies" to feed their huge broods more easily.

Post-War, membership in the Mommies has been extended to the spouses and children of charter members, as well as to any Lifer who adopts children orphaned by the War, or who takes responsibility for bringing up the children of a Lifer terrorist who is serving prison time or facing execution.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Special. Must meet any one of the above criteria.

Affiliation Benefit: You receive a +1 increase to your Reputation score when interacting with other Lifers. In addition, when shopping at Lifer controlled merchants, you may present your Virginia Dare identification and purchase civilian goods at a discount. Doing so reduces the item's Purchase DC by 1, to a minimum Purchase DC 2. This ability cannot be used to purchase goods with any Restriction rating.

New Promise Soldiers

"But that's life when a weapon is what you are. Not all you are, but the first thing, the most important thing."

-Melissa, I Love Bees.com Alternate Reality Game

New Lifer Powereds emerge with disturbing regularity, far more than what could be accounted for by random mutation or by a latent metahuman's ancestral gifts emerging at puberty. Despite the best effort of APEX and the Choicers to track, catalogue and restrict the creation of new Lifer Powereds, new post-human soldiers emerge every day, to lead rescue-strikes and assassination missions deep into Choicer territory. Lifer genetics labs and cyber-enhancement foundries were officially decommissioned with the

War's End, and their enhancement tech confiscated.

However, new (and increasingly lethal) Lifer Powereds are coming from somewhere. The existence of new Lifer enhancement facilities, operating in defiance of the Treaty of Boston, has long been suspected, but has not been conclusively proven. Choicer intel believes that new enhancement facilities and "Rescue-Commands" have been secretly established all across the planet. A high security proving ground is suspected to exist somewhere in the Alaskan wilderness, and evidence of Powered genetics labs have been found in the Philippines.

In addition, turning the beliefs of their enemy against them, the Lifers have begun a culture-wide breeding program to create the new generation of post-human soldiers. Knowing that the Choicer nation will never restrict the right to bear children, even metahuman children destined to be used as living weapons, the Lifer high command has been able to breed a new generation of powered children in the cheapest, most old fashion way possible. Powereds are taught from an early age that is their duty not only to fight for the Lifer cause, but to procreate and spread their divine gifts.

The Kodiak Island Refuge

If Boston is the political and financial capital of the Lifer nation, than its military heart is located in a forgotten corner of Alaskan wilderness. Like Aradia, Kodiak Island was once a federal preserve until it was purchased and repurposed by the emerging pseudo-nation. While Aradia is host to diplomats and theologians from across Earthspace, its Lifer counterpart is a heavily fortified secret. In many ways, Kodiak is one of the best kept secrets of a nation obsessed with secrets.

The Coalition for Life acquired the massive preserve early in its history, though exactly when is a subject for much debate. Ownership and land transfer records are intentionally confused, and the island's true history is mired in a Gordian knot of dummy corporations, false trails and misinformation. Some records indicate that the former federal preserve left government control sometime during the first George W. Bush administration; other records, equally convincing, show the actual transfer of ownership didn't take place until the mid 2040s.

Whatever the truth, today the Refuge is firmly under Lifer control, though the land records say a completely neutral Saudi oil baron technically owns the land. The surface of the island is unremarkable. Aside from a few surveyor's buildings and a handful of tiny offices, the land hasn't been touched.

The actual Kodiak Island Refuge extends several miles beneath the island, a military base the size of a small city. Thousands of Lifer veterans and their families live and work at the Refuge, including a large Powered contingent. Many of the Powered children born and raised on the Island have never seen the outside world, aside from during strike missions. In addition to its role as the 'arsenal of God', Kodiak's primary purpose is to breed and train the next generation of Lifer super-soldier.

The remainder of Lifer military strength is garrisoned on the island, including a small but impressive fighter wing and several Shell battalions. Most of the new weapons and equipment finding their way into the hands of modern Lifers were assembled on Kodiak. To prevent easy detection of their assets by satellite, the island is protected by an innovative series of hologram and psi-based illusions. Since the Refuge is located on the Alaskan coast, most missions launched from the Island deploy a few miles off shore. Most Lifer equipment, including their Shell suits and VTOL troop carriers, can easily survive a 'wet' deployment.

In addition to the Kodiak Island Refuge, the Lifer nation has several other secure fortresses. Most of these "Alternate" sites are manned only by a token custodial staff, and aren't used for active missions. Instead, if Kodiak Island is ever discovered, the Lifer nation will move its operations to one or more of these Alternates.

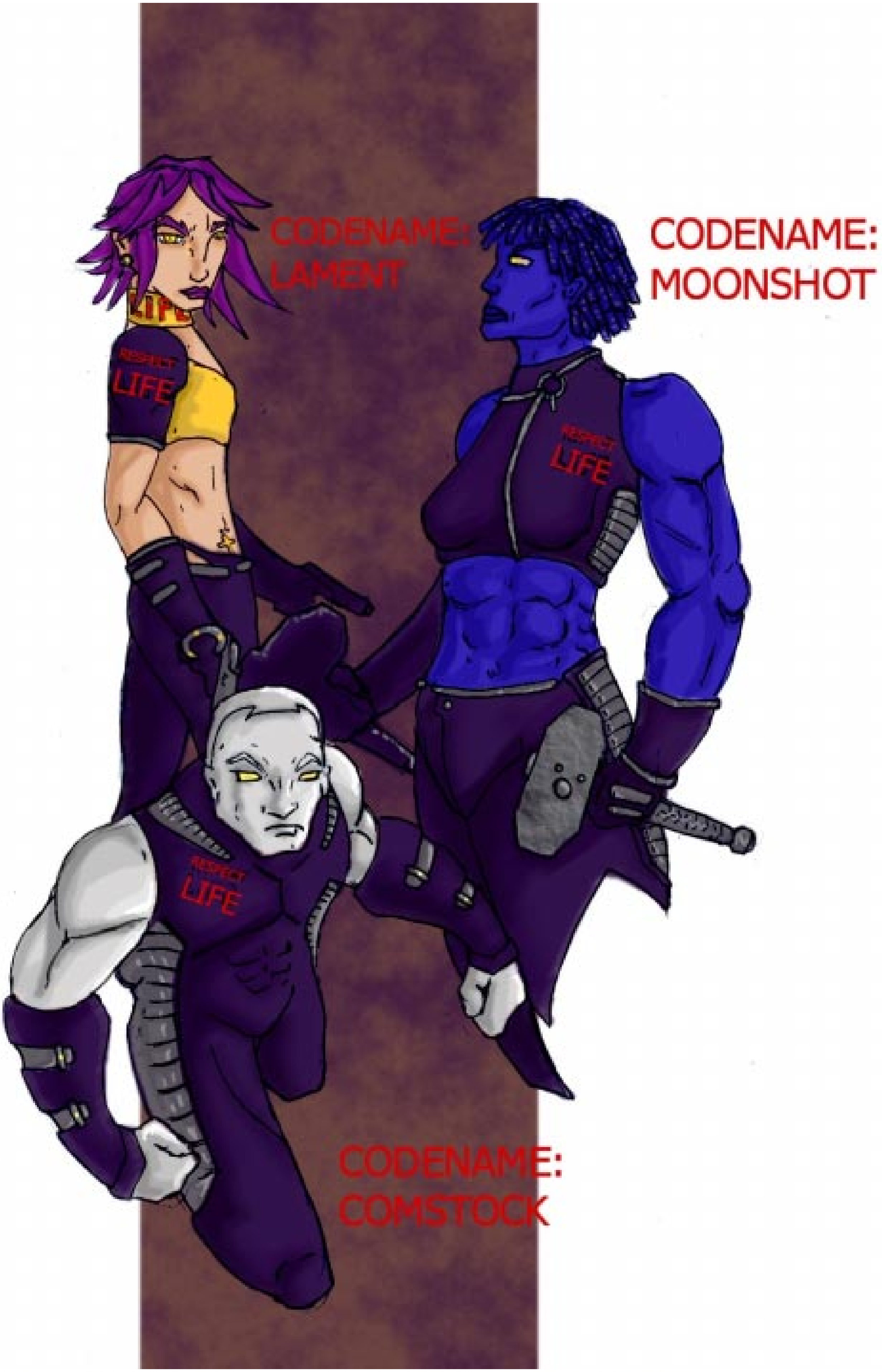
The largest and most mission-ready Alternate is Alternate One, located on the Russian Island of Nova Zemyla (New Land). High in the Arctic Circle, Nova Zemyla was used by Russia/the Soviet Union as a nuclear dumping ground throughout most of the 20th and 21st Centuries. It is one of the most desolate, polluted places on the planet; only an exceptionally durable Powered could hope to survive there for any length of time.

That fact alone makes it perfect for the Lifer's needs.

Alternate Two is located somewhere in the Philippines. Alt-Two is an active site, used as back-up storage for Kodiak Island's genetic samples. Copies of every Lifer genome are kept at Alt-Two, to ensure these potent gene-lines aren't lost if Kodiak falls.

Starting Occupation: CFL Kid

"CFL Kid" is the nickname within the movement for the metahuman children born, raised and trained at Kodiak Island. The CFL Kids are the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LIFE
RESPECT LIFE
RESPECT LIFE
RESPECT LIFE

elite metahumans of the movement, proud and highly trained soldiers. Though only allowed away from their Island refuge under tightly supervised conditions, these committed and frightening young men and women have the combat experience of multi-tour veterans.

CFL Kids are often used as unpredictable, rapidly deployable shock troops. Launched from Kodiak, they swarm a clinic somewhere in mid-America, destroy it and its defenders, and then fade away into the night. CFL Kids mix stealth and raw firepower into a deadly whole. Unlike many Lifer soldiers, CFL Kids rarely adopt war names until their late teens, if at all, rarely speak to the media, and prefer to be known only by the successful rescues they've carried out.

Camaraderie and morale is extremely high; the CFL Kids of a particular 'class' consider one another family, and are encouraged to mate within the squad, both to bind the unit closer together, and to provide the next generation of post-human soldier.

Prerequisite: Age 12+, any Lifer or similar allegiance, some form of post-human abilities, cybernetic enhancement or psionics

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Climb, Craft (electronic, mechanical), Demolitions, Disable Device, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (tactics, technology, theology & philosophy), Move Silently, Navigate, Pilot, Repair, Spot, Survival, Swim, Treat Injury, Tumble

Bonus Feats: Select either Personal Firearms Proficiency or Combat Martial Arts as a bonus feat. All Lifer children are expected to be warriors for the preborn, especially the elite metahumans born and raised on Kodiak.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1

Birth, Death and Everything In Between

January 22nd, 2106.
Boston, MA. Capital of the Lifer Pseudo-Nation.

They dropped almost gently from the sky, pulling each other's clothes off as they fell. The boy tore the crimson bandit's mask away from the girl's face and kissed her hard. A blood red scrap of spider-weave cloth with the word LIFE emblazoned on it in proud black letters flittered away into the cold and the darkness. The boy was on the bottom when they hit, and the impact with the snow covered, frozen graveyard earth almost knocked the wind out of him. The boy grunted. The heat of their forceshields melted the snow to vapor with a low, serpent's hiss, and the night air shimmered with unexpected warmth.

The girl straddled the boy, who paused in his passion for just a moment and looked around. A graveyard at night, and here they were, going to fill quiver in the marble shadow of a Grave of the Unborn. He shrugged, and laughed, his breath steaming in the air. She laughed with him, whispering incoherent passion, telling him how much she wanted this, wanted him, wanted a baby with him, wanted to make a life….

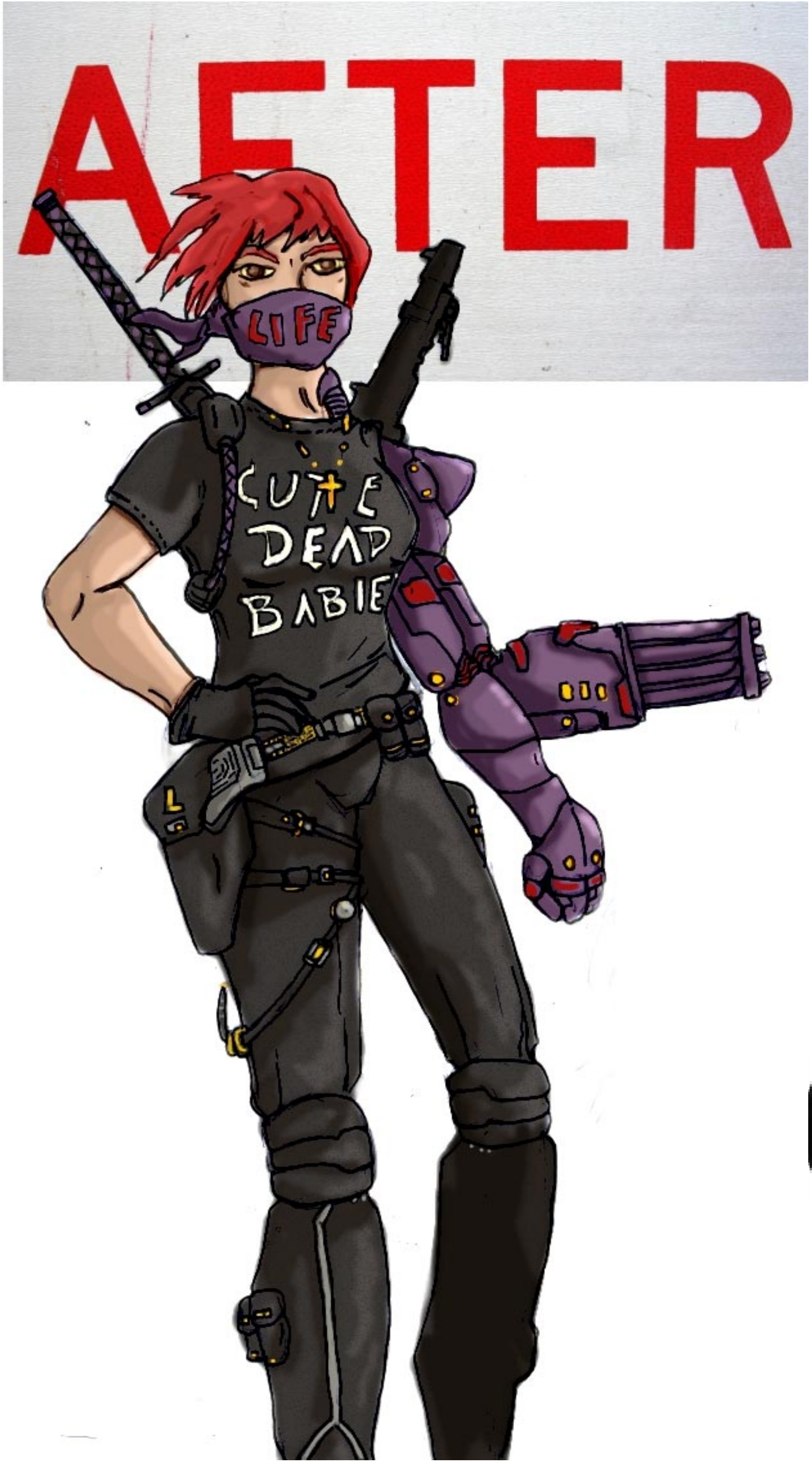
He heard and understood it all, knowing the words were as expected and necessary as his own babble was. He replied that he wanted her, had wanted her since he saw her at the Christmas Rescue last month, that he'd die along side her if need be, that he'd die to protect their baby….. It was all true and passion-filled, but it was also all rote and instinct, things they said without a moment's thought as their hands undressed each other and their lips kissed.

He pulled her armored black and white tunic over her head. The shirt had a picture of a bloody human fetus that moved and squirmed in real time thanks to nanoactive filaments embedded in the armor's weave, and bore the message: "160 American babies are murdered every hour." Neither of them saw it. The boy was looking at *her powerful arms, beautiful sculptures of granite and chrome, which blended seamlessly with her soft brown teenager's torso. Her arms, her legs, those were inhuman, but he was pleasantly to see that her breasts were still human. He goggled, and she laughed that she kept her breasts unmodified so she could nurse. Her anticipation, not just of the sex, but what came after was a physical presence.*

His shirt was simpler, just armored cotton, a purple so dark it was nearly black, and the bold white letters: Abortion is Homicide. She didn't read the message consciously, as she pulled his shirt off. Beneath, the boy's sleek young chest was covered in the thin tracery of subdermal fiber-optic conduits. The power-channels glowed a faint yellowish-orange beneath his pale skin, and cast strange shadows here in this still and quiet graveyard. She runs a metal finger across one of the suit-interface ports on his upper shoulder, just above the clavicle, and asks him what he pilots.

He answers proudly, but the answer doesn't matter. That he's a combat pilot in the A.O.G- that he's a committed rescuer- that he's Full Pro-Life, and so is she, that's all that matters. She kisses him hard and all further conversation ends. The only noises from that still and silent cemetery become involuntary ones. They lay together in the snow, and their forcefields keep them warm. And in a few minutes, new life begins.

Reinforcements are on their way.



"You will not silence my message.
You will not mock my God.
You will stop killing my generation."
- Rock for Life statement of purpose

As much as Lifer culture celebrates pregnancy and birth, it is also a culture marked by its fascination with death. To Pro-Life America, the country is soaked in the blood of murdered innocents, and every Lifer family in America has lost friends and loved ones to the violence of the War. From the beginning, the pro-life movement has used blood and gore to make its point: grotesque photographs of dismembered or saline scalded fetuses are one of the most visceral, eye-catching arguments the movement can make against abortion.

It's hard to shock a Lifer with the sight of blood or the threat of violence. Most tend to be surprisingly cool and collected in the face of danger, and have the kind of situational awareness it takes beat cops months to learn. Lifer humor is black and morbid as congealed blood, and is highly fatalistic. At their best, Lifers are born soldiers and fearless warriors, burying their fear under a thick armor of faith and duty.

Just as with Choicer techno-paganism, Lifer America has its own symbols and traditions. Lifer culture is built around a single issue: ending abortion in America. To a lesser extent, the Lifers wish to spread their faith and convert the Covenant to their own militant breed of Christianity, but that is a secondary concern. Ending abortion, eliminating it as a WORD, as a CONCEPT, is the sole overriding goal of the Lifer movement. Ironically, if the Lifers ever succeeded, their culture would either disintegrate or rapidly mutate into something unrecognizable, its driving passion satisfied at long last.

Lifer culture is built around the *Rescue*- around all the words, thoughts and deeds required to end abortion. Evangelism and witnessing are duties, and Lifers are almost required to wear the icons of their faith as t-shirt logos and tattoos, patches and pins. Well organized protests and die-ins designed to snarl traffic and attract media attention in Choicer cities are daily occurrences. Ironically, this daily schedule of planned protests has diluted their impact, and the media only covers protests when they turn violent, or are attended by a high profile Powered. This both marginalizes the vast number of non-violent Lifer activists, and rewards the hardline Direct Action crowd by giving them a few minutes of Mesh celebrity after a shooting.

Symbolic acts are given as great of weight as tactical actions. Lifer districts are seeded with small, symbolic gravesites and markers dedicated to the victims of abortion. These small shrines may be found in suburban backyards, behind Lifer resturants, in Megachurch Enclaves or even in the courtyards of Lifer shopping malls and mezzanines. Some of these "Graves of the Unborn" are decorated with ornate funeral statuary or smartlight displays, while others are little more than a polymer plate, pre-fab plastic cherub or weeping angel statute.

Protest marches often begin at one of these symbolic Graves and wind slowly through the city. Lifer mothers who have themselves undergone an abortion keep silent vigils by these graves. Each year, on the anniversary of the *Roe vs Wade* decision, and the Lifer movement's greatest defeat, white roses and milky white water lilies are left on the graves, along with more personal sacrifices. It's impossible not to be touched by some of the unintentionally primal sacrifices left on the grave- toys and teddy bears, flowers and bowls of food, despite their origin as political theater.

Lifers wear black and grey clothes as symbols of the never ending period of mourning for the 'never-born'. The stylized eye slits of Lifer power armor seem to weep obsidian tears for the slain unborn. Others wear symbols of death as a symbol of strength and resolve, or in an attempt to intimidate their Choicer enemies. Skull and skeleton motifs are common as armor decoration, and many Lifer full conversion borgs resemble some horrific and cybernetically enhanced undead monster. As their powers emerge, many Lifer metahumans develop hideous, heavily armored carapaces shaped by their beliefs.

Even the most hideously mutated Powered or cyborg rarely raises any eyebrows among Lifer citizens. Living tanks and Lifespawn abomination are allowed to walk the streets of Lifer neighborhoods in peace, without the horrified second glances they'd attract any where else. This easy acceptance of the bizarre and post human has attracted huge crowds of Powereds to the Lifer camp, drawn more by a need for community and companionship than politics.

New Affiliation: Squad Gianna
Official Designation: None
Formation Year: 2023 as Gianna's Blessings Mesh forum; renamed and reorganized 2073
Motto: **"**The best thing I can show you to defend life is **my** life."

Squad Gianna is an anomaly, in that it resembles a support group for those with unique abilities rather than an official military unit. Named for a Gianna Jessen, 20th century Lifer activist who survived a botched abortion, Squad Gianna is a collective of superhuman Lifer warriors and activists, all united by their shared experiences as both Lifer activists and post-humans. Squad Gianna is a way for Lifer metahumans to network with others of their kind, even like-minded outsiders, outside the rigidly impersonal nature of the AOG's cellular structure.

Squad Gianna members straddle the line between operational risks- their communications have allowed APEX and the federal government a window into the secretive world of Lifer metahumans- and reward. Squad Gianna provides a public, non-violent forum for contact between Lifer and unaligned metahumans, even if it's over Mesh links and Dreamscape instant messages. Squad Gianna activists have maintained the Lifer nation's profound commitment to protecting Powered life from gene-selection abortion and discrimination, something which has allowed the movement to recruit from a deep well of Powered talent.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Knowledge: popular culture 2 ranks, either tactics or technology 2 ranks, Diplomacy 1 rank. Prospective Squad Gianna members must possess some form of innate, unusual abilities, such as Lifechain or Genefeats, the Psionic Subtype, an alien heritage, or membership in a basic or advanced class, such as ***Powered Hero,*** *Coldbringer* or *Combat Type*, which provides its members with super-abilities.

Affiliation Benefit: Squad Gianna activists are well versed in metahuman affairs and are respected voices in the transhumanist and post-human communities. The activist receives a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks and Knowledge: popular culture checks made concerning or against Powereds and post-humans. Additionally, if the character has Squad Leadership feat, he or she receives a +1 bonus to effective character level when recruiting metahuman followers or cohorts.

Young Lifers have adopted a post-Gothic culture. These young activists are pale and pallid, dressed in funeral black and purple. The wealthiest Lifers mark their bodies with decorative cyber-elements: silicon based transparent skin revealing muscle and bone beneath, zombie-style implants which make a living teenager resemble a rotting corpse or aborted child. Others, lacking the funds for extensive cosmetic implants, ritually scar or tattoo themselves, either to remember the causalities their forefathers suffered during the War, or in sympathy with the unborn.

This obsession with death has shaped the other main sexual drive of the Lifer nation, a distorted reflection of the pregnancy fetish shared by most members. Partially out of genuine desire, but mostly to shock their parents, many young Lifers have developed a taste for necrophilia and death play- mostly simulated through CGI porn, cosmetic cybernetics and object philosophies that allow enthusiasts to mimic death. Occasionally, true necrophiliac rituals are performed as a final farewell between battlefield comrades, a taboo and private funeral ritual in a society already overburdened with secrets and operational security.

Living Witness (General)

Survivors of abortion are, by definition the rarest of all creatures, but a handful exist. They are living propaganda pieces and emotionally stirring activists and witnesses, spared by strange luck, their would-be mother's last second reluctance, or metahuman defenses or regenerative abilities that were active even in utero.

Prerequisite: CON 13+, character level first only

Benefit: The character has a strange facet to his or her origin: he or she is a 'survivor' of an incomplete or failed abortion. The unusual birth makes the character an especially compelling advocate and marks them forever as a tenacious, durable survivor. The characters relationship with their birth parents, if any, is a matter for the character to decide.

Once per day, you can declare your history, either verbally or by pointing to scars or deformities caused by the trauma. Doing so is a full round action. Doing so is emotionally draining for you, and you are considered *shaken* for 1d6 minutes afterward. By declaring your history you gain a +6 insight bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Knowledge: civics or theology & philosophy as well as Profession checks made concerning abortion or made to aid your primary allegiance. These bonuses remain in effect for a number of hours equal to your CON modifier or until you next sleep.

If you critically succeed on any of the above checks made against anyone with a pro-choice (or similar) allegiance, you gain a temporary action point which must be spent before you next sleep, or it is lost without effect.

For others, the Abortion War itself has been fetishized: the killing of attractive young abortion providers for sexual thrill, not just political reasons. After action reports and helmet cam footage from War-era execution details are heavily traded on Mesh servers, lovingly examined for every detail of the death struggles of Choicer gyno-priestesses. Despite the Lifer high command's best efforts to stamp it out, this dark fetish continues, a secret within a nation built on secrets, compartmentalized information and plausible denial.

Murder has been fetishized by a small percentage of Lifers, but martyrdom and the concept of a heroic, tragic demise is a staple of Lifer romantic fiction. Lifer romances virtually always end with the death of one or both lovers, no matter whether these stories are told as interactive Mesh 'toons, movies, traditional novels or memory modules. In Lifer fiction, heroic rescuers meet on the battlefield, fall in passionate (though mostly chaste) love, and are finally torn apart by death during an engagement with the Choicers.

Tearful visits to a Fed-Gov death row, to say goodbye to a lover and committed fellow rescuer, are a stock element of Lifer love stories. The fantasy of paying off some Choicer prison guard for a first, last and only sexual encounter with a doomed beloved is just as common. The only time premarital sex is shown on screen (or seen as acceptable by the hardliner culture) is at the death chamber door. For the Lifers, still reeling from their defeat at Boston, even something as simple and natural as romance is tainted by tragedy.

Lifer Style, Culture and Entertainment

At their best, Lifers are be motivated by compassion for all life, and they draw strength, unbreakable courage and moral comfort from their beliefs. Despite the fact that many see themselves as holy warriors fighting a legally sanctioned slaughter of innocents, pro-lifers are not without a grim, morbid sense of humor. Or an equally grim sense of style.

The pro-life movement wears its heart on its sleeve- and on its t-shirts, on its stickers, buttons, bumpers and front lawns. Being Lifer requires a commitment to being an evangelist, to wearing your symbolic 'colors' as proudly as any gang-banger. From t-shirts with catchy, memorable pro-life slogans, subtle lapel pins worn on business suits, to minivans and hovercruisers covered in antiabortion bumper stickers, everything a Lifer wears and carries proudly proclaims his or her allegiance. The Sigil is more than just the symbol of the War-era Lifer AOG, it is the flag of a newly emerging Christian nation.

The Lifers have more than their fair share of talented artists and propaganda-makers, who draw upon their rage and horror and frustration with the failure of their military to create stirring, unforgettable works of art. The Lifers have revolutionized several older art forms, making them uniquely their own, as well as pioneering new forms of expression.

Jazz and the slow, mournful melodies of the blues are given new weight and purpose by Lifer musicians. Smoky nightclubs, lit by purple neon and smartlight sonogram images drifting through the crowd are filled with the sounds of protest and anger. Traditional blues songs are supplemented by newer, harder lyrics which mourn for slaughtered children, friends lost in battle or lost to prison. Traditional blues and jazz have all but died out among main stream and Choicer Americans, but remain alive and vital in the Lifer enclaves.

Since the beginning of the movement, the Lifers have embraced 'termite tactics' to close down clinics, using imaginative vandalism, sit-ins and lock-ins of occupied clinics and cruel practical jokes played on both doctors and patients. First person view 'termie videos' of successful raids rescue-pranks are uploaded to the Mesh and Dreamscape servers, and a well-done prank can win the young termite instant respect and acclaim. Some of the cleverest termies spread like a virus across Choicer servers, even their enemies forced to admire the young protest-punks' skill and audacity.

Starting Occupation: Termite

"I believe 'termite tactics' refers to the small things that eat away at a place [abortion clinic], which might include lock rescues and glue."
-Shelly Shannon, member of the 20th century Army of God

"We are the rust upon the gears, we are the insects on your lips. We crawl, we crawl all over you."
-Rise Against, Reeducation

Termites are the infiltrators, saboteurs and passionate amateur soldiers in the Army of God. They are best described as the National Guard of the Lifer Nation- citizen soldiers who maintain a civilian career and identity and who serve with the ,

the Lifer army during times of need. Termites come from eclectic backgrounds, and have an equally diverse array of skills, but their commitment can't easily be questioned, and their contributions are many, if minor.

Prerequistes: Age 17+, any Lifer or similar allegiance, INT 13+

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Craft (chemical, electronic, visual art), Demolitions, Disable Devise, Disquise, Hide, Knowledge (behavioral sciences, civics, current events, popular culture, theology & philosophy) Perform (sing, standup), Research, Sleight of Hand

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Brawl, Builder, Creative, Dodge, Far Shot, Low Profile, Meaningful Ink, Personal Coda, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Tagger.

Alternatively, the character can select any Lifer feat for which he meets the prerequistes.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1

Reputation Bonus Increase: +0

While the Lifers have resurrected the prank-video, they have also revolutionized the horror film. Mainstream entertainment companies have had their fill of blood and violence during the War, and Choicer entertainment is intentionally light and emotionally uplifting. Lifer films are a product of their real world experiences every bit as much as the victorious Choicer nation's action-comedies are a reflection of their confidence and surety of their place in the world. To the Lifers, modern society is a place of endless, existential horror, where the preborn are slaughtered by the millions and simply being Good isn't always enough to triumph.

Lifer horror movies are genuinely horrific, never shying away from the extremes of gore and torture. Heroes die, often without accomplishing their mission; villains and monsters survive and thrive, but always new generations of believers rise up to continue the struggle. Cutting edge CGI, nanoactive prosthetics and shapeshifting metahumans are used to produce death scenes on film indistinguishable from reality. Theaters are fitted with low-grade empathic weapons and terror-pheromone mists, skewing the audience's perception of time and distance and increasing horror. As terrifying as a film can be in a theater, it is even more mind-blasting and emotionally affecting when experienced in a Dreamscape server or person, as part of a Halloween Hell House display.

The Death Penalty

The death penalty has fallen out of favor for civilian crimes. Though some states retain the right to put prisoners to death, the penalty hasn't been imposed since the mid 2080s. The federal government maintains the country's only active death row, and capital punishment is reserved exclusively for treason, espionage or war crimes.

Since treason usually defined as an attempt to overthrow the US government, and by extension, the allied Choicer pseudo-nation, Lifer extremists make up the overwhelming majority of condemned prisoners. It's a fact that no Lifer activist will ever allow the general public to forget. The average time between conviction and execution (which is usually accomplished by the injection of a specifically tailored, ultra-lethal nanotoxin) is 2-3 years. Those put to death by the Fed-Gov are considered martyrs to the Lifer cause, and their memories are honored at the annual White Rose Banquets.

Aside from the Fed-Gov's death row, America's prisons are less crowded than they were during the 21st Century. Prison sentences, especially for first offenses, are shorter than they were during the previous century, since many psionic brainwashing and reeducation techniques offer a genuine and fairly certain method of rehabilitating offenders and preventing future crimes.

Horror is not the only genre the Lifer entertainment industry publishes, though it is the best known and most pervasive. Major Lifer publishing houses and recording labels publish fiction and docu-dramas steeped in Evangelical Christian belief, exactly as they have for decades. Pensacola, long a hot-bed of anti-abortion sentiment and violence, has become the sun-drenched capitol of the Lifer entertainment industry. In addition to film, Mesh and novels, the Lifers share a national obsession with their idol singers, attractive, expertly packaged and cunningly managed celebrities.

Idol Singers are not only celebrities, they are on the front lines of the Lifer memetic war-front. Idol songs are poppy, ultra-easy to remember tunes, often designed by advanced AI authors with comprehensive databases on human emotional response, ad campaign design and social psychology. Lifer philosophy is articulated in effervescent songs, designed to catch and hook listeners, to indoctrinate them to the ethos without conscious awareness of the propaganda. How effective the marketing ploy is remains open to debate, but even the most hardliner Choicers occasionally find themselves humming the hook from a recent Lifer pop hymn.

The Lifer recording industry is pushing Congress to allow the insertion of minor, non-hostile 'thought-viruses' (telepathic photon based computer viruses) into their songs as another way to spread their message.

Starting Occupation: Targeted Idol

You've spent years building up a media presence designed specifically to appeal to one segment of a divided America. You may be a perky, stylish pagan advocate for Choice, or an innocently sexy Lifer idol singer. You choose your words, your associations and your pre-packaged media blowups and scandals to enhance your credibility and market share among your target demographic.

Prerequisite: Age 13+, must select either a Lifer or Choicer allegiance

Preselected Feat: You must be a devout (and highly public) believer in your cause. You must select any one of the following feats as a 1st level character: Chosen and Beloved, Living Witness, Meaningful Ink, Personal Coda, Pro-Life Scion, or Oathbound.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. IF the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Craft (visual art, writing), Disguise, Gather Information, Knowledge (Arcane lore, art, behavioral sciences, business, popular culture, theology & philosophy), Perform (any) or select a new Speak Language choice.

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Ad Campaign, Athletic, Creative, Educated, Renown, Trustworthy, Windfall

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

Reputation Bonus Increase: +3

The Lifers have come to dominate one other artform, one no one expected. Gardening and breeding of new floral-strains are common hobbies. Lifer florists and botanists have become among the best in the world; the white roses and lilies laid on Graves of the Unborn each January 22nd are specially bred hybrids. Just as Lifer farming collectives dominate 22nd Century agriculture, Lifer botanists have come to dominate the floral industry. In addition to the important role of flowers in Lifer ceremonies, young Lifers are encouraged to learn botany for another, more tactical reason. Genetically engineering lilies is good practice for genetically engineering supersoldiers, and the skills necessary to breed a white rose are the same skills necessary to harvest plant toxins.

At The Movies

Like modern-era Americans, the citizens of 2107 spend billions of dollars annually on pop culture. Entertainment, like most other facets of 22nd century life, has become segregated by choice and politicized. Popular, century-plus franchises, such as Superman, James Bond, Star Wars and other familiar icons are marketed separately to each faction; competing versions of the same characters have their own unique adventures in Lifer and Choicer-run theaters, Mesh servers and print-on-demand manga.

Original creations abound, even as familiar icons thrive. 2107's top grossing summer block-buster is the Lifer period horror *Redchapel*. Very loosely based on the 19th century Jack the Ripper murders, the gore splattered film uses a familiar Lifer horror archetype to good effect.

At least according to the film, Jack the Ripper is a midwife/abortion provider gone rouge, using his dark skills to mutilate women. The trope of the murderous abortion provider is a familiar Lifer trope. Unlike others of his ilk, *Redchapel's* villain is instantly recognizable for the steampunk weapon gauntlet the filmmakers provided him, a bizarre and utterly fictional Victorian take on a Neo-Witch Midwife's shapeshifting prosthetic arm.

Unknown to most audiences, the design of the weapon is borrowed heavily from another horror icon, one that's been forgotten for nearly a century: Freddy Kruger. Of course, only a few humans alive in 2107 are old enough to remember Freddy Kruger, and no entertainment lawyers are among that elite club. A copyright infringement lawsuit has never come, because Kruger, like so many creations of the 20th and early 21st centuries, is languishing in an electronic file somewhere in Mesh obscurity. While the information is not lost, per se, it is buried so deep under the weight of years that while a simple Mesh search would find the data, almost noone alive knows (or cares) the data is there to be found.

In Choicer theaters, the top grossing film is the comparatively light and frivolous romantic comedy, *Quiet Sunday In*. Starring the shapeshifting Choicer beauty Merideth "Outfox" Staris, the film's plot follows a young Choicer high priestess who finds love at an arranged Sunday Romance. Over the course of the film, she wins her Lifer would-be boyfriend's heart, even converting him to the worship of Maiden Isis. In contrast to the pervasive violence in *Redchapel*, the only actual conflict in the film is restricted to words- a catty battle of wits between the Choicer heroine and her lover's Lifer mate.

Unexpected Commonality

As different as the two Americas have become, the Choicer and Lifer nations share a handful of common traits, no matter how much hardliners on both sides deny the fact. One of those commonalities is that 'dating' and the singles scene, as understood by 21st century Americans is a vanishing phenomena. Arranged marriages and community courtship are growing in popularity among both nations, and political activism and sexuality have become inextricably linked for many.

The Choicer nation has romanticized its clinic defenses and counter-protests nearly as much as their Lifer adversaries have fetishized the rescue. For many 22nd Century singles, activism is a form of dating, a way to meet like-minded, committed lovers. Many romances have begun after a clinic protest winds down, when the adrenaline is pumping hard and fast. The siege (or defense) of a Choicer clinic has become a social gathering, and many 'combat volunteers' take special care to ensure that they look their best as they brawl on the picket lines.

Body armor and bruises have become fashionable sex symbols. The Lifer slang 'layin' down', refers not only to sex but also lying down on a city sidewalk, and playing dead during a 'die-in' at a Choicer clinic. Finding a cute girl who is willing and able to 'lie down', in both senses of the word is a goal for every young Lifer male.

For those who don't find love during a street riot, romance becomes a community event. Community dances and block parties are common to both nations. Choicer covens often help their members find mates, arranging highly ritualized rendezvous between nervous young lovers, while Lifer mega-churches offer a similar service through Mesh-based dating forums.

Less formally, a recommendation from a friend that an acquaintance is trust-worthy and honorable enough to be a potential hook-up carries great weight. Faith and an activist streak have become vital in both cultures, and 22nd Century singles trust their friends to find it. War-era platoons form the nucleus of modern families, as veterans (of both genders) introduce their dating-age children to their combat buddy's offspring and hope sparks fly. Formal arranged marriage agreements bind veterans together, and even in the highly feminist Choicer nation, are seen more as a way to bind and strengthen the community (and the nation) as a whole than as a way to control the lives of young girls. Sons are as likely to be doweried and promised to a squaddie's daughter when she comes of age as a daughter is to be promised to a comrade's son. As a result of these complex webs of intermarriage, most members Lifer and Choicer combat squads are related to each other by blood or marriage, and urban warfare has become a family affair.

Valuable and Valueless

Twenty-second century Americans still exchange rings as part of the marriage ceremony, but the forms those rings take have changed dramatically. Gold, silver, diamonds and other precious stones and metals can easily and cheaply be synthesized in the lab, or be naturally generated by many breeds of Powered. Some metahumans can alter molecular structure with a thought, and can create a flawless diamond the size of a basketball, a fact that has fundamentally altered the world economy.

Raw commodities, unless they have an obvious use in and of themselves (such as oil or grain) have little value to a 22nd Century consumer. Finished materials, particularly hand-crafted items and art objects have value, as does information, skilled service and labor. Commodities trading is a thing of the past.

Precious stones and metals are an order of magnitude cheaper than their 21st Century equivalents, and jewelry has mostly fallen out of fashion. A diamond bracelet that would of sold for over a thousand dollars might only fetch a hundred dollars, at best in a modern jewelry store. The one exception is heirloom jewelry, which is bought and given more for a sense of history than raw material value. Many young brides are presented with a ring that has been in the groom's family for generations.

Jewels more than a century old have value equal or greater than to their previous raw material cost. Fragile, difficult to care for gems that degrade over the years have much greater rarity, and thus greater value than durable stones like diamond. Few 22nd Century betrothal rings are diamond; many of the priciest are heirloom opal or jade.

Many metahumans prefer gems and metals created by one of their own kind. Wearing 'organic' gems is a status symbol, and a tangible reminder of the beauty and universe-altering power the Powered race possesses. As a part of many metahuman weddings, the participants use their powers to actually create their rings, before the eyes of the assembled crowd.

Naturally, gems that combine both traits- heirloom 'organic' gems -are some of the most valuable art objects on Earth. Many of these items date back to the mid 2030s, when Powereds first began emerging as a social force, and have names and heritages almost as legendary as the metahuman soldiers who produced them. The Nakamoto Slivery, the Raxwire Opals, the Rhinehart Blue Set, and many others are family heirlooms worth millions, which are handed down among the descendants of these early metahuman scions.

Sunday Romances

"Sunday Truces" allowed the armies a day to rest and recover during the War, for a generation of Americans, Sunday became the one day of the week they could venture out of their war-torn neighborhoods without the fear of being caught in the middle of a meta-human street battle. Now, in the post-War era, Sunday afternoons have become time for artificial and exactingly polite encounters between modern Choicers and Lifers.

Moderates in both camps have transformed the old Sunday Truces into 'Sunday Romances', a way for singles in both nations to encounter their counterparts peacefully. Even if romances never spark, the organizers of these Sunday Romances hope that understanding and tolerance will. For the most part, long-term relationships stemming from a Sunday Romance are rare, but the Romances offer 22nd Century Americans a rare chance to peacefully interact with their counterparts on the other side.

Sunday Romances are more common in states with a mingled, integrated Lifer and Choicer population, but they're growing in popularity even in pseudo-nation power centers like San Francisco and Boston. The gatherings are always public, and are a strange mix of dating club hope/nervousness and justifiable paranoia. The program was almost scrapped in 2094, after the murders of several Choicer women who chose to attend the encounters, but continues today, under stringent new security arrangements.

The gatherings are held in open, public areas, and attendees are instructed to identify themselves only by their first names or by a pseudonym, and are cautioned (heavily) about trusting too easily. Parks, large and well defended Covensteads, megachurch gymnasiums and hotels have all hosted Sunday gatherings, and physical security is usually provided by a mixed squad of Lifer and Choicer metahumans. These troops are sworn to uphold the truce, no matter their feelings for each other personally, and organizers work carefully to ensure that each meta-human attendee (whether working security or there as a guest) is countered by an equally powerful metahuman from the other side. The Cold War ideal of mutually assured destruction has been repurposed to serve the mingled interests of pacifism and arranged dating.

The Meta-Porn Industry

APEX is one of the largest metahuman standing armies on the planet; it has a roster of nearly 150,000 active duty Powereds and other metahumans. The Lifer and Choicer militaries each have similar numbers of gene-enhanced combat troops at their disposal, maybe more. By contrast, the North American porn-industry employs nearly 350,000 metahumans and near-human aliens each year. Most Powereds might only contract for a single shoot, while others (especially the world's vast roster of non-combat Powereds) have made lucrative careers as post-human porn celebrities.

The meta-porn industry's rise has paralleled (and influenced) the development of military genetic engineering. During the early 2010s, when the first generation of Half Grey were just beginning to arrive on Earth and the first post-humans began emerging, the 21st century porno industry became a welcoming sanctuary for the new, the strange and the inhuman. Companies competed with one another to sign the most attractive, most exotic near humans, offering million dollar contracts to newly arrived alien visitors and newly mutated Powereds. The same financial backers that made Hollywood an international power in the previous century migrated to the meta-porn industry, stunned at the record profits and (if you'll pardon the expression) market penetration the first meta-porn films achieved.

For many transformed humans, being an online sex symbol was preferable to being seen as a freak or some kind of living weapon. For xeno-immigrants, a porno paycheck was seed money to begin a new life, on a new world. For the meta-porn studios themselves, their exotic new stars meant record profits, as audiences would pay huge premiums or subscription fees to catch a glimpse of something never before seen in human history.

Profits from early meta-porn films paid the R&D costs for the second generation of military genemods. Needing a constant stream of new, attractive metahumans, the porn industry invested in building its own. Gene-sculptors working for the industry eliminated the genetic design flaws common to first generation Powereds; their efforts eventually culminated in the development of the 'stealth' Powereds of today, who are mostly indistinguishable from un-modified humans. This research also took the opposite path, building obviously inhuman Powereds, but ensuring these eye-catching mutates are sleek, symmetrical and strangely erotic, not the hideous living weapons that many non-human first gen Powereds were.

The meta-porn subculture provided a way for early Powereds to interact and network beyond the battlefield and away from military channels. Like the mid-21st Century sport of Orbital Sumo, meta-porn provided a ready force of metahumans for the pseudo-nations to draw upon when they built their armies.

During the first Powered generation, the line between meta-porn star and Combat Type warrior was more blurred than it is today. Many early metahumans took whatever work they could find, from mercenary and private security work to Mesh sex, and many of the more charismatic and attractive Powereds supplemented their income with seductive blogs and explicit, subscriber based Mesh-sites. Even Powereds who didn't participate in porn directly made small fortunes licensing their image and biometric data to AI-scripted, photo-realistic CGI simulations, a practice that continues to this day.

Today, the military and the meta-porn industry have become, if not mutually exclusive, then more difficult to reconcile. APEX standing orders and enlistment contracts prohibit meta-porn production while on active duty, though some APEX veterans join the industry after their enlistment ends, and APEX has recruited promising metahumans from within the industry on occasion.

The meta-porn industry is a billion dollar business, and has crossed over to the mainstream of American entertainment. As Hollywood's influence waned, California's metahuman adult entertainment studios grew. By contrast non-meta porn is no longer a big business. At best, it's a cottage industry or a profitable hobby. Non-meta porn is purely amateur- aside from supporting roles in meta-porn videos, the major studios have completely abandoned pure-human stars. Small Mesh-sites, cult followings and niche markets are the name of the game.

Still, slipping beneath the obscurity of porn remains a way out of poverty for many. During the height of the War, the industry represented one of the only non-military options for metahuman teens. Though America's economy has recovered since War's End, pornography and licensed prostitution are still occupations, even among the otherwise conservative Lifer nation. Many Lifer students pay their tuition with a dorm camera feed, and an independent rescuer may fund her operations by licensing her image and neural-map to sim-porn artists.

Like pornography, prostitution is legal, and fairly omnipresent in 22nd Century America. The occupation still carries with it a stigma, and probably always will, but today prostitution is seen by many as a better, less dehumanizing option than mega-corporate work or the insecurity of a McJob. To the Lifers, prostitution is another means of survival- it may not be an ideal situation, but its better than depending on Fed-Gov handouts. By contrast, most Choicer sects view prostitution more favorably. Prostitution is seen as the willing sale of the one possession no one can ever take from you-your own body and sexuality. Prostitutes in Choicer communities are seen more as canny, hardworking entrepreneurs, rather than victims.

Despite the destigmitaztion of prostitution, many sex workers come from the lower, desperate rungs of Choicer society, and many have a history of sexual abuse. The same is true in Lifer communities, though a growing number of well educated, psychologically unscarred men and women are choosing prostitution and the sex industry as a viable, alternative career path.

Starting Occupation: Porn-Blogger

"I've dreamed of becoming a porn star since I was eight years old," she giggles,, describing how she would daydream during class pondering the perfect porn name.

She already owns two homes.

She's 20."

-Scott Sterling, 'Porn To Rave' Urb Magazine, October 2003

You produce Mesh-distributed pornography. Your market exposure is relatively small, but a subscription service bearing your image and films generates a steady income stream, and a little bit of notoriety.

Prerequistes: CHA 13+, Age 15+

(The age requirement is not 18+, as would be expected for a present-day adult entertainer, because the age of consent has been lowered to fifteen nation-wide, and has been so since the Battle of Boston. Older teen pornography is legal, though subject to heavy federal oversight and carefully monitored working conditions.

A young career in the porn industry isn't without its consequences however. Many unaligned school districts have a policy of expelling any student whose involvement in blog-porn can be conclusively proven, to 'prevent class-room disruptions' Those wishing to remain in high school are usually forced into a Lifer or Choicer run school, where their source of income carries its own stigma.)

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Craft (visual art or writing), Disguise, Knowledge (art, popular culture, streetwise), Perform (any), Profession, Sense Motive

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

New Affiliation: Soft Palace Meta-Naturals
Type: Privately held corporation
Incorporation Year: 2019
Corporate Motto: Beauty Beyond Imagination.

Soft Palace is one of the largest adult entertainment houses on the planet, which has achieved fame, and come to dominate Mesh and Dreamscape pornography by specializing in metahuman, extraterrestrial and full cyber conversion sex. By catering to the public's lust for the unusual and the post-human, Soft Palace has succeeded as a brand in a highly competitive field where most companies are unknown and interchangeable.

Soft Palace plays a surprisingly important role in Powered culture. Most adult metahumans receive an invitation to star in a Soft Palace vid-shoot or to allow their image to be licensed for CGI dating sims within a few weeks of their empowerment. Soft Palace offers young, unaligned metahumans specialized medical care, genetic testing and access to cutting edge civilian genemods and luxury cybernetics in exchange for a lucrative career as a contract boy or contract girl.

Affiliation Prerequisites: CHA 13+, Renown, Knowledge: popular culture 4 ranks, some type of post human abilities, age 15+

Affiliation Benefit: Powereds working for Soft Palace can make excellent money as adult entertainers, courtesans, high dollar prostitutes or even by licensing their unique genetic code to interested buyers. By working through a Soft Palace broker, the Powered receives a discount on commercial genetic engineering, cybernetic treatment and medical care, reducing the total Purchase DC of the service by –2. Soft Palace porn starlets receive a +2 bonus on Profession (sex worker, courtesan or similar checks) and Knowledge: popular culture checks made concerning other post humans in the entertainment industry.

Sexual Abuse and Assault

2092. San Francisco, CA.
451 Days since War's End.

Her mother had died in the last terrorist bombing of the Abortion War, falling out the sky along with a plane full of reporters returning from Boston. And than things had gotten worse. The slow and stupid shuffle through foster homes, the post-trauma counselors that didn't do anything, that didn't even notice the real trauma that was anything but 'post'.

Her mom had been Choicer, strong and proud, so the Lifer Block Mothers didn't want anything to do with the issue. If she'd been Lifer, they'd of taken her in, given her to some other Lifer family. She'd of been raised Lifer and Evangelical, but at least she would have been raised. The Lifers had a lot of hardwon experience caring for the orphaned children of fallen soldiers.

Instead, Cassie Andra Feneris was in a Russian Hill emergency room, lying as still as the admitting physician had told her to, while the aerosol cloud of sensor nano-tech settled onto her teenaged contours and tingled slightly as it ran a standard rape-kit. Here and there, static crackled and flared as the scanner-mist encountered a dust bunny hidden in the molecular folds of her t-shirt, or a microscopic patch of rust on her jeans zipper. She stared up at the acoustic ceiling tiles and counted the dots, intentionally not thinking. She wished she could stop.

She'd always loved computers, loved machines. She knew exactly how the nano-mist coating her body and slipping between her skin cells in search of foreign DNA worked; given a good walk-thru, she could probably program the forensic AI as good as any med-tech. She'd always been amazed at AI capabilities, but even (in her child's way) she was even more amazed at the capability of the human brain. We could learn like an AI, but unlike an AI it was very difficult to make a human's systems freeze or crash.

Cassie wished right now she'd crash and reboot and when she woke back up, everything would make sense again. Even if things went back to the sense of the War, that would be okay, because that was just war and she could deal with that. But they wouldn't and so Cassie lay flat on her back, skin tingling as the nano-aerosol did its work, and counted the dots in the ceiling tiles.

The micron wide cloud of robots inventorying her skin beeped, softly, twice, and the tingling sensation ended. The woman Cassie was making it a point not to look at spoke softly, "it's over. Would you like this one….. Would you like me to cover you up?"

Cassie half turned her head; the movement made the pain in her jaw a little bit worse. She blinked away tears, took in the woman. The teenaged girl wondered if woman was the correct term; it was a human term and the woman wasn't really human. She was Half Grey, a human hybrid species from the history books, from class room lectures about early 21st century xeno-politics. The Half Grey woman leaned against the emergency room sink, looking out through a slit in the privacy curtain for a moment before turning back to the girl on the exam table.

The alien woman's huge pupilless black eyes are set in an expression that might be kindness. Cassie couldn't read the expression, not really, and she was too mentally exhausted to try, so she looked instead at the weapons the alien woman was carrying. Small caliber energy weapons slung on quick draw holsters ergonomically distributed around the alien's lithe body. Cassie tried to identify the guns, and got about half of them. Maybe. Finally, Cassie's inventory of her savior's pistols complete, she could no longer delay her answer. "I'm okay. I'm- I'm not cold or anything."

The alien woman nodded curtly, her bone white fingers tracing the almost pink privacy curtain.

Cassie propped herself up on one elbow, and winced. Bruises were beginning to settle into the girls muscles, and everything was hurting now that the adrenaline of…. what had happened…. was done and gone. Cassie sighed and asked the question she'd been chasing around her mind since she had met the alien woman.

"Why are you here. I mean tonight? I…. Who are you?"

"This- my name, the one my human friends call me is Tamus. I knew your mother a little bit. She was my source sometimes. Sometimes I was hers. I liked her."

The alien's voice softens, and unconsciously, her thumb slides down the buttstock of the energy pistol holstered under her right armpit.

"I'm sorry about what happened to her. I was in town and wanted to check in on you. I…. I hadn't had a chance until now. For that I'm sorry."

Cassie nods and pushes herself up into a sitting position, hugs her legs to her chest. She wants to scream and cry and kill (again, her mind reminds her and she wishes she could crash) but she just swallows hard and nods. "It's okay. You- you didn't know."

Tamus rises from the sink, her soft, bare feet squeaking against the hospital's cold tile floor. The alien woman shrugs her shoulders, and wraps regret around herself like a cloak. The alien whispers a neural command to a smartlight computer cluster hiding between the synaptic gaps of her brain, and a data window appears in one hand. Cassie takes one look at the face of the man displayed in the file, shudders and once again wishes she would crash.

"I should have. The man-"

"will." Cassie the name all in lower case, and knowing she can't crash, won't crash, she goes back to staring at Tamus' guns. She stares hardest at that one under the alien woman's right armpit, the small one she can't identify the make on. She can't identify the make of that gun, but she knows how the buttstock goes hot for just a second when you pull the trigger, and how the air smells like a thunderstorm after a shot, and how the backsplash from the ion beam burns away the tiny hairs on the back of your hand….

Cassie looks down at the faint, red hairs that no longer decorate her right hand. Tamus offers to slide the holographic data sheet into that hand, but Casise just clenches her now-hairless fist tight and shakes just a little. Tamus nods and continues, soft.

"William Silva Durbin. He was a….foster father for orphans in this city. More than twenty children passed through his care since 2085. You were placed with him by the government because you had no living kin."

Cassie nods curtly. She knows this, and it hurts. Tamus touches the girl's shoulder, and the girl forces herself not to flinch. She refuses to be the weak, cliché, Mesh-movie rape victim like that. She doesn't flinch, but Tamus feels her trembling.

"The Mortaris were speaking to a lawyer about adopting you…."

Cassie looks up, shocked into joy.

"I didn't know that! I-"

Tamus nods again, and feels the girl relax just a bit under her touch.

"It would have happened sooner or later, Cassie Andra. It was just a matter of the right paperwork, the right money, of waiting for the right judge in the right court to hear the right argument."

Tamus dissolves the information window, its contents already committed to memory.

"Durbin was a pedophile, Cassie Andra. He was also an associate member of the Night-

side Mesh Ring. His access to children without families….”

“He made mesh porn. I get it. I know.”

“Before coming to San Francisco, he lived in the Lexington Enclave. There was a death warrant out him. The Lifers had found out what he was, so he made up a new identity and hid in the one place he knew the Lifers would never find him, among the only culture he knew wouldn’t even know about the death warrant. Took a new name, became an upstanding Choicer citizen.”

Cassie blinks. She’d figured some of it out, but most of it was new to her. Again, and again and again, she just asked herself, why did this alien woman help her? Why bother with her? Why give her a chance to….

“Don’t mourn for this man, Cassie Andra. You fought as long and hard as you could, and than you fought even harder. I’m sorry I couldn’t come to you sooner, that I didn’t know about this until yesterday. And most of all…. I’m sorry I could not capture Mr. Durbin alive and deliver him to the tender mercies of the Tennessee A.O.G. I’m very sorry I had to kill him.”

Cassie blinks and wonders if she had crashed, and she opens her mouth, and than closes it again.

“Very sorry I had to kill him, even though I have been given full weapons release authority by the Covenant’s Woven Circle. I’m very sorry that I had to kill him in the line of duty, as I have been deputized to do by both the FBI and APEX. Very sorry, do you understand?”

It takes the girl a few seconds, but eventually she nods, and Tamus smiles that alien smile at her. Than the alien cocks her head like a dog hearing something its human companion can’t and looks out through the slit in the almost pink privacy curtain.

Now, given what has happened to you, we will all understand if you don’t want to talk too much.” “Now, Cassie Andra, the physician and the investigators are returning. The officer is a good friend of mine and he is very sorry I had to end Mr. Durbin’s life also. Do you understand?

Cassie almost smiled, suddenly forgetting what had happened to her. Or if not forgetting, than baffled that the Mesh-movie about the scared little rape victim that she was living had suddenly mutated into some bad cop-drama. Having little other recourse, the girl just shifted her expectations into neutral and let her mind idle. She would take each moment as it came, and eventually it would all start making sense again, even if it was the sense of the War.

“They will examine you. A Covenant Midwife will do this, since she has the best training for it, if you are comfortable with that. I do not know your politics. I can remain with you or leave you to your privacy. And after that the detective will take your statement, and than… I’ll find you a place to stay for the night. The Mortaris will take you in. They’re on their way now, and will be waiting outside for you….”

Cassie sat straighter on the exam table, and tried to look in control and to mimic inner calm. She wiped her bruised face. She wiped away the few tears she didn’t even realize she had shed, and waited for the world to start making sense again, even if it was only the sense of the War. Cassie told Tamus she was ready, and could hear the footsteps approaching on the other side of the privacy curtain, the rhythmic clicking of combat-weight boots on linoleum.

“And remember….”

“You’re very sorry about will. Got it.”

Tamus pulled back the almost pink curtain…..

" Being a teenager in America is a high risk occupation. They're the most likely to get shot, stabbed, beat up, bullied, turned on to chemicals, turned into zombies- and used and abused by the people who 'counsel' them after all that."

-Andrew Vachss, Pain Management

As much as human culture has changed, humanity itself hasn't fundamentally changed. Humans of the 22nd Century are still subject to the same compulsions, lusts and rages that plagued earlier humans, and sometimes commit the same atrocities as earlier generations. Rape, exploitation and child abuse still occur, and still leave scars, perhaps even more often in the 22nd Century than in the century previous, because both sides have expended so much cultural capital in winning the Abortion War.

Especially during the height of the War, America's police forces had little time and few resources to expend investigating sex crimes and child abuse cases. Faced with a choice between tracking down human sexual predators or dealing with metahuman terrorists capable of annihilating entire cities, American law enforcement chose to pursue the more obvious threat. Most of the sexual offender databases, victim advocacy initiatives and psycho-forensic knowledge of the previous century was simply lost during the War-era. American law enforcement was only able to begin recovering its lost expertise after the Treaty of Boston was signed, but even then, they faced an uphill climb and a continual battle for resources and expertise.

The organized and highly efficient nation-spanning police forces of the 21st Century disintegrated into a motley collection of competing jurisdictions and ideologies in the 22nd. Sexual predators and other serial predators gained a freedom of movement unmatched since the pre-VICAP days of the early 1980s. A serial rapist or child molester could evade detection for months, even years, simply by hop-scotching between various Lifer and Choicer jurisdictions, confident that the rival police forces won't (or can't) share data with each other and connect his crimes.

Both nations share virtually identical rates of 'known-offender' sexual crimes, such as incest, date rape and other crimes, despite the statements of pundits on both sides. How the two cultures deal with the offense is strikingly different however. The Choicer nation depends on its court system, and the larger American judiciary, to protect and defend its victims. The Choicers have worked closely with the FBI and APEX, not to mention local police agencies, to rebuild the nation's ability to investigate sexual crimes.

When an offender is captured, Choicer law usually emphasizes rehabilitation over vengeance, though the Bastian sect favors the death penalty for rapists and pedophiles. The Choicer nation uses telepathic manipulation and cutting-edge persona sculpting techniques (including the implantation of thought viruses) to ensure that sexual predators never re-offend. Completely rebuilding a sexual predator's personality requires months of effort, and the assistance of skilled psychics. The procedure represents such a complete alteration of the subject's base personality, that many of the procedure's critics see little practical difference between it and the death penalty.

By contrast, sex crimes are rarely brought to trial among the Lifer Enclaves, and are usually resolved by a cadre of Block Mothers with access to a noose and a convenient lamppost. The Lifer nation distrusts and fears the police, seeing them either as Fed-Gov pawns and infiltrators or as agents of the Beast (or both).

Police investigating a crime in the Enclave are conditioned to never expect cooperation or witnesses, and always expect 'neighborhood justice' to resolve the situation within a few weeks. Part of the Lifer reluctance to talk to sex crimes investigators stems from fear, but a good part Lifer silence comes from a lack of a shared vocabulary. Many Lifer children, and even some Lifer adults, lack even the basic sexual anatomical knowledge to give a coherent statement to an investigator. Likewise, with their lack of basic gynecological knowledge, Lifer detectives are often forced to rely on a Neo-Witch Midwife to collect evidence after a rape. Many Lifer victims never report a rape to the police out of fear of being touched by a Choicer abortion provider/ gynecologist. Knowing this, many of North America's worst sex offenders risk stalking the Enclaves, knowing if they're careful they can get away with things they never could in the outside world.

Victims of sex crimes are treated very differently in the two cultures. Lifer culture still mistrusts sexuality, and though the Enclaves have a better understanding of the psychology of sex crimes than their 21st Century Evangelical counterparts, there is still a subtle undercurrent of victim-blame when speaking of sex crimes. There's still a trace of the old, illogical belief that an assault victim (especially one who committed the ultimate sin of crossing over into the Choicer neighborhood for an abortion) must have done something to provoke the assault.

By contrast, Choicer victims of assault are treated more compassionately, though the Choicer emphasis on rehabilitation has left all too many feeling cold. Choicer victims are expected to eventually forgive their rapist; desiring vengeance or wanting to see the offender punished, bloodily, is something 'those people' (meaning Lifers and other Christians) do. There's an unspoken assumption that Choicers are expected to rise above their vengeful impulses as proof of both their own moral superiority, and that of their faith. Choicer sex crime victims aren't stigmatized for the rape or abuse itself, but some find themselves looked down upon when they display a very human anger or thirst for vengeance, a social failing that has driven some Choicers permanently into the Enclaves.

22nd Century Law: Psionics and Sex Crimes

Mental abilities are as common as genetic gifts, and American law has had to rewrite its definitions of privacy and identity as a result. Psionic law is constantly changing, as new techniques and countermeasures are discovered, and new understandings of human psychology are mastered.

The simplest answer is that the use of a psionic power to commit a crime is punished identically to a non-psionic version of the same crime. Psionic voyeurism or identity theft is punished as harshly as mundane methods of illegal surveillance; psionic rape and mind-domination is every bit as much a crime as purely physical assault. Unfortunately, psionic crimes leave little forensic evidence behind. Especially in the case of psionic assaults, it is the ultimate case of 'he said/she said', making prosecution of such crimes difficult at best.

The role of psionics in police procedure has been subject to even greater scrutiny than the role of psions in the civilian world. The Supreme Court has held that testimony from accredited psychics can be admitted into a court of law, and is given the same weight as the testimony of any other expert witness. Psionic detectives are allowed to use clairvoyance, object reading and psionic probes to solve crimes, subject to the same legal restrictions a non-psionic search would entail.

Using a psychometric talent to examine evidence left behind at a crime scene is treated as just another futuristic forensic technique. Spying on a suspect with psi-talents requires a warrant, just as non-psionic surveillance does. Psionic capable interrogators are allowed to launch invasive psi-probes, only after identifying themselves as a psion, allowing strong willed criminals a chance to set up mental defenses.

Evidence gleaned from psi-probes is never accorded the same weight as a confession or physical evidence, and is primarily used to provide investigators with new leads, such as the location of physical evidence in the criminal's memory. Due to their relative scarcity, psionic interrogators are used only for the highest profile of cases, in the most extreme situations.

Crossline Abuse and Predator Alleles

"An abortion clinic's a great place to meet loose women. Why else would they be here if they didn't like to fuck?"

-Jay, Kevin Smith's Dogma, Lion's Gate Films (1999)

The new century has brought with it new crimes, as well as new ways of looking at ancient offenses. Crossline crimes of all kinds, ranging from armed robbery and con games, to rape and street beatings, are common and only rise as tensions between the two nations escalate. "Crossline" offenses refer to a Lifer or Choicer criminal crossing into enemy territory purely in search of some crime. Though these crimes may bear the trappings of politics, they represent a crime of rage and opportunity more than an act of terrorism.

The stereotypical crossline offender is young, male, and poorly educated, with a surface level grasp of his faction's politics. Using propaganda and rhetoric to justify their violence towards citizens of the rival nations, crossline gangs are capable of shocking brutality. After all, if your victims/political rivals aren't really human, who cares how much they suffer? Crossline rapes and home invasions often end in blood, and particularly horrific offenses have sparked riots and street-to-street gun battles. Though not as heavily reported by either nation's media, crossline thefts, con games and financial scams cost the pseudonations and their citizens millions of dollars each year.

"Predator alleles" were first documented during the mid 2010s, though their true significance wasn't clinically proven until nearly two decades later. Early research into the genetic roots of crime indicated that many (though not all) sex offenders and fixated pedophiles shared several common genetic traits, and that a preference for sexual violence or underage partners is a genetically hardwired trait, just like non-criminal sexual orientation. Though not every sex criminal possessed these genetic markers, and these markers could also be found among the non-criminal population, these alleles came to be short-handed as ‘predator alleles’.

Geneticists remained divided on the impact these alleles actually had on a human’s thought processes and behavior; someone with these alleles may have a predisposition for particular crimes, but there was no certainty that the presence of these genes lead to criminal behavior, or that the absence meant a person could never commit a sex crime. Despite this, mid-21st Century law enforcement began using genetic testing for these predatory alleles as a way to reduce a suspect pool, and as a justification for the permanent imprisonment/commitment of criminals whose gene profile met the predator test. Employers required ‘predator testing’ of new employees, and the housing market began barring ‘predator positive’ renters from most apartment complexes and neighborhoods. Even in the nascent Lifer nation, if an amniocentesis showed the presence of predator alleles, an abortion was quietly encouraged.

A series of Supreme Court decisions during the mid 2050s ended the systematic discrimination against the ‘predator positive’. Today, police are allowed access to medical records to check for the presence of the predator gene. The presence of the gene can be one factor in a detective’s application for a warrant or can be used as an argument for continued surveillance of a suspect, but can’t be the only factor. Only a few occupations- mostly those having close contact with children- are legally allowed to require a pre-employment predator screen and even predator-negative candidates are required to undergo full background checks.

Realtors and apartment complexes are no longer allowed to require a predator test, nor are most other employers, though known predator-positives face an uphill climb for jobs and housing, since with enough money thrown at the problem, even the most private medical records can be accessed.

Children are routinely tested for the predator alleles while in kindergarten, and children who test positive are usually placed into a separate educational stream. Classes for predator-positive children place special emphasis on empathy, interpersonal behavior and non-violent problem solving, hoping that conditioning will prove stronger than genetics.

The world’s military are torn on the role that predator-positives should play in combat. The Lifers, Choicers and APEX all screen for the gene upon enlistment though noone seems sure exactly what to do with soldiers who test predator-positive. On one hand, predator-positive recruits are often barred from high-end human enhancement programs, though the psychological traits accompanying the predator alleles make humans with these traits ideal intelligence operatives. In conjunction with typical psychological and aptitude assessment, predator-testing is used to place recruits into assignments within the nations’ intelligence communities. Predator-positive recruits who lack the expected killer instinct are often sidelined in low level positions, not trusted with command and considered as much a liability as an asset.

The presence of the predator gene is represented by the Preferential Hunter feat. Selecting this feat means the character displays a genetic predisposition for violence, especially sexual violence. Though the feat provides the predator-positive character with some advantages in hunting his or her preferred prey, it carries with it a major social stigma.

Preferential Hunter (General)

Human beings have only one natural predator: other human beings who find sexual arousal in violence. These fearsome, sociopathic hunters have thoughts dominated by fantasies of extreme sexual violence and strange obsessions. The closer a victim’s death sequence comes to the hunter’s fantasy, the better.

Prerequisite: character level first only, any non-good allegiance

Benefit: You are a potential serial killer, sadist and lust murderer who targets a specific type of victim, who fits your fetish perfectly. When this feat is chosen, you define a favorite victim type, by defining six demographic categories: species, gender, race/ethnic group, political affiliation, age category and basic class membership. *(For example, your preferred target may be a white human male Choicer, in the young adult age category, with at least one Tough class level).*

The closer your target comes to your ideal victim, the more effective you are in hunting that victim-to-be.

If your target meets at least 3 of the six criteria, you receive a +2 bonus on melee damage rolls, on attack rolls when striking to inflict subdual damage, and Bluff, Hide, Intimidate, Move Silently and Survival checks made to track/trail the victim-to-be.

If the target meets four of the five criteria, the bonus increases to +3.

If the target meets five or more criteria, the bonus increases to +4.

Drawback: Commercial genetic scans and the Scanner gene feat can easily detect the presence of this feat, though they cannot determine the predator's preferred victim type. These alleles are recessive, and may be passed onto offspring, at the gamemaster's discretion.

In the Otherverse America setting, characters with this feat suffer a -2 racial penalty on all Profession checks, reflecting the stigma that accompanies the presence of predator alleles. When legally purchasing any item with a restriction rating of Restricted (+2) or greater, the predator must make the purchase as if the item's purchase DC were one higher, reflecting the additional licensing and legal restrictions placed upon those with this genetic background.

Pedophilia and Child Pornography

Pedophilia is defined by 22nd Century psychologists as an aberrant sexual orientation, a distorted version of hetero- or homosexuality which is a fundamental part of the pedophile's personality. Classified as a genetic disorder, gene therapies such as Bi-Shift and Heteronorm are usually used during early childhood to rewire a young pedophile's sexual appetites to normal ones. Unfortunately, not every potential pedophile is detected through early childhood predator-scans, and not everyone who victimizes children does so because of genetic compulsion.

Like other sex crimes, child sexual abuse is epidemic across 22nd Century America. In the century before, teachers and pediatricians, counselors and clergy, those who worked closely with children, were usually the first to notice signs of abuse. Today, teachers are more concerned with which of their students are manifesting metahuman talents at puberty, who have mastered illegal combat Object Philosophies, which students are members of a Termite cell, and which just dress like they are to fit in. Faced with obvious threats, quieter horrors go unnoticed.

With these horrors come scars. Many of the metahumans (on both sides) made their choice to go post-human as a response to the pain in their past. The majority of full conversion cyborgs come from a background of sexual abuse, as do many less-augmented cyborgs and combat types. Squad Gianna, the Lifer's outreach forum for young metahumans does referrals for in-depth counseling (with Lifer aligned physicians, of course) as well as providing anonymous on-Mesh advice for young post humans dealing with sexual violence. Out of necessity, RESCUE International and various Choicer organizations provide similar services.

As the age of consent has been lowered, the definition of pedophilia has been slightly altered. Older teens have been recognized as sexual beings, capable of consenting to adult relationships, and even able to participate legally in the prosperous meta-porn industry. Nationwide, both the voting age and age of sexual consent have been reduced to 16. Among the Covenant, the age of sexual consent is slightly lower- usually around 13 to 15, depending on the individual sect and the maturity of the child involved. Covenant teenagers are only allowed to participate in sexual rites (as well as mundane sex and romance) after a public rite, welcoming the child into adulthood and maturity.

As expected, the Lifer nation criticizes the practice as institutionalized pedophilia disguised as non-Christian religion. However, strong societal pressure among the Covenant protects children from obvious exploitations. Teen lovers enjoying each other’s bodies, or a group of young friends celebrating the carnal Beltane rite together is acceptable, but for adults to prey on inexperienced teenagers as easily controllable sex partner is another. In the Enclaves, the lowered age of consent has simply decriminalized a behavior that had long been an accepted part of the culture. Teen parents are common, and for a girl to give birth to her first child before she’s 16 is the norm, not the exception.

Child pornography still exists, though actual child sex performers are rare. Most child pornography is fully computer generated, or drawn from Dreamscape fantasies. The reason is simple- a pornographer with only a moderate knowledge of computers and graphics can script an entire kiddy porn movie indistinguishable from reality, and the end result is perfectly legal. Rather than trading the film in secret, the simulated porn can be traded openly, even advertised! Like metahuman porn-bloggers, the biometric data of child actors can actually be inserted into the AI scripts which govern the simulations, allowing the CGI creations to respond similarly to their flesh and blood counterparts, a disturbing transaction which blurs the line between child modeling and a very high tech form of prostitution.

FULL CONVERSION CYBORG

Player Species: Full Conversion Cyborg (Human background)

Large Monstrous Humanoid (PL 7)

"If you live through this with me,
I swear, I will die for you."
- Courtney Love, Live Through This

"More than sixty percent of all full conversion cyborgs have been sexually or physically abused at some point in their lives. This fact, it's true one across the board; it doesn't matter if the cyborg is Lifer, Choicer, is a member of the US military, or belongs to some other corporation or interest. Regardless of affiliation, it is likely that at some point in his or her life, the borg- this indomitable, unstoppable war machine, knew what it means to be a ***victim****.*

To most abused children, cyber reconstruction's the perfect deal. The minute they
turn 16, they sign with the first people who can make them this promise: Come work for
me, and in return I'll strip away the human weaknesses, in many cases, the very sexuality, the skin- that has made you a victim. That makes you ***weak****.*

I'll give you an indestructible metal body, wire your nerves into guns and jet
engines, download combat training right into your brain... and make you strong, so strong you never have to worry about being hurt ever again. All of a sudden..... boom. Thermo-nuclear capability is in the hands of a kid whose father beat him till his bones cracked....since the day he was ***born****.*

It's a testament to the ***strength*** *of these people's souls that we don't have to stop*
more *of them because they've gone rouge."*

-Dr Fabian Obregon (warname: Mind Games), transcript of a Mesh-Know-Now! interview after the Lesbos Beanstalk Incident, late 2107.

Cybernetic implants are as common to the 22nd Century as cellular phones were during the early 21st Century. Military cybernetics programs enhance a soldier's capability with implanted subdermal armor or onboard weapon systems. Young priestesses replace the flesh and blood fingers they were born with as a sacrifice to choice itself. Cyborgs are everywhere in 2107, but full cybernetic conversion is still rare. It's not just a matter of money, despite the multi-million dollar surgery required to create an FCB; it's a matter of psychology. Very few people have the will necessary to surgically remove their flesh and blood humanity and replace it with steel and composites.

Those who do, for whom total body prosthesis is the only choice, are a special breed. A handful of full conversion cyborgs become beings of steel and silicon as a matter of survival, not choice. There are very few injuries 22nd Century medicine can't heal, very few diseases that can't be cured, but for the small, unfortunate minority full cyber-conversion is a better option than a life time of paralysis or an early death.

However, most full conversion cyborgs choose this path, giving up perfectly healthy meat-bodies in favor of cybernetics. Why? Corporations and the military recruit trans-humanists, who are willing to enter a decade long service contract for a chance to climb the techno-evolutionary ladder. Patriots, fanatics and true soldiers become full conversion borgs for a chance at the power necessary to make their ideals a reality.

However, nearly three quarters of all full conversion cyborgs world wide share a single common tragedy. Most elective cyborgs are the product of long term sexual abuse during childhood. As soon as these damaged children reach adulthood, they cut away the flesh that hurt them, transforming themselves into an invincible polymer-skinned juggernaut, someone who can never be harmed (sexually or otherwise) again.

Full Cyber-Conversion In Game

There are going to be plenty of cybernetically enhanced player characters in an Otherverse campaign, including many so heavily modified they're often mistaken for Shell Suits. The FCB player species provides a strong, durable cyber-chassis to build upon, giving FCBs an advantage lesser 'borgs can't match. Thanks to their built in power supply, FCBs can field more and better cybernetics.

A player can choose to undergo full cyber-conversion in game. If the character is human, he retains his human racial traits after the conversion (bonus feat and additional skill ranks), though the character no longer receives the additional skill ranks for being a human after the procedure. If a member of another species undergoes the conversion process, he or she loses most, if not all of their racial abilities, and replaces them with the FCB's racial ability listing.

Individual gamemasters should decide if unique abilities, particularly psionic or magical talents innate to a particular race are lost during the conversion process. In most cases, abilities explicitly referencing the character's original anatomy are lost. Similarly, human characters with abilities directly tied to their original anatomy (such as Genefeats) are lost during the conversion process.

The FCB racial traits are treated as an acquired template added to the base creature. Performing the cyber-conversion requires a well equipped surgical suite. In most cases the cyborg's surgery is performed over a several day period, while the 'borg remains in a medically induced coma. In most cases, a cyborg requires a 2-3 month period of recovery and psychological adjustment before entering active service, and is virtually helpless, requiring complete hospitalization for the first few days after the surgery.

Purchasing Full Cyborg Conversion has a Purchase DC 34 + 1d6 (DC 35-40) and has a base restriction rating of Restricted (+2).

To offset this cost, many newly created cyborgs arrange a contract with a megacorp or the military. Terms of service typically last between 10-15 years, with lucrative bonuses for reenlistment. In addition to front line combat service, cyborgs are also employed in mining, space exploration, heavy industry and other high risk occupations.

Many companies offer 'short-time' contracts to their FCBs. In exchange for a decade or more of service, a cyborg is returned to full humanity at the end of their contract period. Once the contract expires, the cyborg is installed into a freshly decanted cloned body, custom grown to their specifications. The cyber-chassis is than refurbished and reused by another short-timer 'borg.

Appearance: The appearance of individual FCBs varies wildly, depending on which entity the 'borg works for, and who they purchased their systems from. However, all members of this 'weight-class' of cyborgs share similar design elements.

All FCBs are heavily armored, robotic humanoids resembling light shell suits or androids. Cyborgs have a metal and composite endo-skeleton which mimics human proportions and anatomy, with thick layers of artificial muscle tissue and Kevlar pseudo-skin woven around robotic components and equipment pods. Dense composite plating protects the cyborg's vital areas.

Most cyborgs have eliminated all traces of their human appearance, and their skulls resemble a combat suit's helmet or a robot's skull rather than anything human. A distinct minority have human seeming faces. Despite the realistic appearance and texture of their skin, it is durable polymer, as resistant to damage as the cyborg's armored body. In all cases, the only thing organic that remains of the cyborg's birth-body are the brain, portions of the spinal column and some of their optic nerve.

Reproduction: Full Conversion Cyborgs are sexless creatures by their own choice. They cannot reproduce, do not feel physical pleasure, and most, freed from the burdens of human hormones, have no interest in sexual matters at all.

Obviously, FCBs cannot select any class with an emphasis on sexuality, including many of Black Tokyo's advanced classes. If the FCB becomes a member of any cybernetically enhanced class (such as the Voidsparrow Advanced Class) which more selectively removes bodyparts, the cyborg is subject to the more extreme cyber-conversion process.

The FCB is immune to most effects based upon sexual manipulation, and in most cases is not considered to have any sexual orientation. Though cyborgs can and do feel love and affection, it's all but impossible to seduce one of these 'borgs.

Names: Full Conversion Cyborgs begin their lives as humans, and their names follow mundane human naming conventions. However, just because a FCB uses a human name, it doesn't mean they keep whatever name they were born with. Many cyborgs legally change their name, or adopt a Soldier Name upon their conversion into a cyber-warrior.

Spot Check DC: None. FCBs are instantly recognizable as a cyborg. It's virtually impossible for a combat-class FCB to pass for human, and most never try. It's possible for a cyborg to disguise itself as an armored human or combat robot, however.

Size: Large. The FCB receives a +4 size bonus on grapple checks, may use larger weapons than its medium counterparts, and it's lifting and carrying limits are double those of a Medium creature. However, the FCB suffers a –1 size penalty to Defense, and a –4 size penalty on Hide checks.

The FCB's base land speed is 40 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: +6 STR, +2 CON, -2 CHA. Full Conversion cyborgs are incredibly strong and durable, but they find it difficult to relate to other people, both due to their obvious cybernetics and to the pain of their early childhood.

Racial Skills: Full Conversion Cyborgs receive no racial skills. Their abilities are determined by their training and interests, not a standard race-wide template.

Racial Feats: All Full Conversion Cyborg receive Iron Will as a racial bonus feat, reflecting the sheer force of will necessary to undertake (and survive) such a radical transformation.

Enhanced Senses: The FCB gains *lowlight vision* and *darkvision* with a 90 ft range.

The FCB receives an implanted communication link and onboard computer, similar to the implants described in the Dept Seven Tech Update: cybernetics. These implants allow the cyborg to communicate wirelessly through the Mesh, send and receive radio and cell phone signals, and perform computer use tanks as normal for a standard computer system. Full Conversion Cyborgs physically disable their wireless card when it is not in use, and cannot easily be hacked.

Full Cybernetic Conversion (EX): The FCB's integrated armor provides the creature with a +4 equipment bonus to Defense, which increases throughout the cyborg's career. This bonus increases to +6 at 5th level, and +8 at 8th level.

Unfortunately, the cyborg's bulk prevents the FCB from wearing additional external armor. The cyborg can pilot power armor, but the FCB's proportions and anatomy mean the suit has to be custom fitted, increasing the total purchase DC by +6.

The FCB no longer needs to eat, breathe, or drink. He becomes immune to the effects of vacuum and radiation. He becomes immune to non-magical heat and cold. The fully cybernetic FCB becomes immune to non-magical disease and poisons, ability drain and energy drain.

Redundant organs and self repair systems enable the FCB to shrug off lethal damage. The FCB has a 50% chance to ignore the additional damage from a critical hit, as if he had the *fortification* ability.

Cyber-receptive (EX): Thanks to the cyborg's high-energy power supply and specially designed artificial organs, he or she can receive an effectively unlimited number of additional cybernetic implants (or points of Drain) without ill effect.

Racial Weaknesses: As a fully cybernetic creature, the Full Conversion Cyborg does not heal damage naturally, though the cyborg can be repaired like any other high tech device.

All FCBs suffer a –2 penalty on all CHA based skill checks (except Intimidate) against any creature with less than two cybernetic implants. Even humanoids with a single implant or a hobbist's interest in cyber-reconstruction find it difficult to relate to full conversion cyborgs.

All FCBs require extensive maintenance, performed by a competent cyber-mechanic in a well equipped shop. Each month of active service, the cyborg must undergo extensive diagnostics and repairs. Doing so requires the FCB to receive a DC 32 Repair check, which requires at least 16 hours in a well equipped repair bay.

If the cyborg doesn't receive these repairs, he suffers a -1 penalty to his STR and DEX scores, and is considered *fatigued* until he receives these necessary refits. These penalties increase by one per week (maximum -10) until the cyborg receives repairs. If the cyborg performs nothing but rest or light activity during a month, he does not require maintenance, but any stressful activity puts a strain on his cyber-systems and increases the likelihood of a catastrophic system failure.

New Controversies

Questions of sexuality and freedom define the legal landscape of 22nd Century America. Abortion remains the dividing issue of the day, but other sexual questions confront modern jurists.

Since sex has been almost completely divorced from reproduction, a new controversy is slowly replacing abortion as the divisive sexual issue of the 22nd Century. Parent-child incest remains universally taboo, but sibling-incest is a growing fad among 2107's teens. Sibling lovers have become stock characters on Mesh dramas and sitcoms, while many young Powereds seek out their own genetically superior siblings as sexual partners.

The rationales for this behavior range from a belief in Powered superiority and a deep revulsion at the idea of sex with a normal, unmodified human, to an unspoken longing for the companionship of your peers, to a desire to breed a genetically superior child.

The Lifer nation is deeply revolted by the idea of Powered sibling incest, and as expected, with incest as a whole. Though the metahuman children produced by controlled inbreeding are some of the most impressive Powereds of the generation, accepting this practice would mean mutating the basically Christian Lifer ethos into something completely unrecognizable. It's a step the Lifers are not willing to take… yet.

Meanwhile, the Choicer nation has **literally no idea** how to respond to this new type of romance. Rather than an organized response, each sect within the Covenant has its own take on the dilemma. Viewed through the prism of the Wiccan Rede, the largest question about sibling incest is whether it harms either participant or their families. Some sects ban the practice outright, seeing it as a potentially crippling aberration, not a case of sexual freedom. Other sects reluctantly allow the practice, so long as a sibling relationship doesn't preclude or hinder other loving relationships. The Bastians have embraced the practice, mostly as a symbol of their rejection of traditional Judeo-Christian ethics, and for the act's power to shock.

Those watching the Powered culture unfold in this unexpected new direction are unsure if this odd affectation will eventually fade out, or will develop into an ongoing controversy with the same national import as the Abortion War.

Catminding

Catminding is a form of voluntary mental bondage, which allows practitioners to partition their conscious mind, creating a hedonistic, seductive sub-mind. Catminders can turn off their higher cognitive functions at will, while leaving their emotions and core personality untouched. The practice of catminding takes its name from the original practitioners of the object philosophy; cosplayers and furry enthusiasts, who developed the technique to briefly become submissive, seductive, subsentient lovers for dominant partners. While catminding, the subject operates on childlike emotion and animal instinct, and is often easily controlled by his of her chosen 'masters'

Catminding is a widely popular form of voluntary mental bondage; 22nd century enthusiasts enter a cat-mind state prior to a rendezvous to completely change their perception of the experience. Cat-minded performers have become superstars in a variety of near future art forms. Some catmind enthusiasts enjoy watching a practitioner enter the catmind trance, and will converse with the subject as her human intellect melts away.

Catminding can be dangerous, in that the disassociative state can last several days as the catminder regains her human facilities and memories. Catminding, in moderation, is no more dangerous than alcohol or most PL 6 narcotics; the after effects are a hangover- like stupor and fuzzy memories until the catminder's brain reorders itself.

However, inexperienced catminders can submerge their intellect to the point they become truly animalistic or even lapse into a healing coma, a state that can last several days. A handful of solitary catminders have died after pushing the technique too far: dying of thirst while in a healing coma after a failed session. Like most bondage techniques, the Catminding object philosophy is not considered safe for solo play.

In most jurisdictions, Catminding and similar intellect dampening mental techniques are treated similarly to drugs or alcohol. Driving while catminding is usually illegal, and many businesses take a dim view of an employee returning to work with catmind-caused intellect damage Monday morning. While catminding, a practitioner's pupils dilate and their eyes are glazed and distant.

The Catmind Trance

Catminding is a popular 22nd Century pastime, despite the risks inherent in the practice. Catminding is similar to Object Philosophies- mental exercises based upon the study of metahuman psychology, though it is relatively easy for a normal person to enter a Catmind trance. Mastering the rudiments of Catminding is as simple as finding a willing teacher, or finding a decent how-to guide on the Mesh.

Entering a Catmind trance requires at least a minute of concentration and a successful DC 14 Concentration check. If the check is successful, you enter the catmind trance state. While catminding, your true human intellect is locked down, and your altered personality is as nimble and cutely playful as any fantasy catgirl or catboy.

During the Catmind trance, you suffer 1d6 points of temporary INT damage. For every two points of INT damage you suffer, you receive a cumulative +1 insight bonus on Jump, Climb, Tumble, Listen and Perform (dance) checks, as your cat-like pseudo-personality comes to the fore. While in the catmind trance, you are treated as having no allegiances, which may result in the loss of certain class abilities.

The class state lasts for a number of hours equal to your WIS modifier (minimum one hour), as do the associated bonus. Lost points of Intelligence recover at the usual rate. If reduced to 0 INT or less, the Catminder falls into a coma-like state until they recover at least one point of Intelligence.

If your check is unsuccessful, you still enter the catminding trance, though you suffer 2d8 points of temporary INT damage. Many professional Catminders intentionally fail their check, so they can lose greater amounts of Intellect and enjoy an even more memorable catminding session.

Beautiful Armor: Otherverse American Fashions

Before Abortion War there must be abortion.
Before abortion there must be sex.
Before sex, clothing is removed. By that logic, clothing is another weapon, and big brands and high fashion are just another front in the memetic war waged between the two pseudo-nations. A designer gown, designed with psycho-active advertisements woven into the fabric, can win battles that a cyber-enhanced fireteam couldn't. And in a world where a riot can erupt at a moment's notice or a Powered terrorist can drop from the sky, even the everyday citizens wear armor.

General Trends

Twenty-second Century America has fully embraced the nano-tech revolution. Virtually every article of clothing- from sweat socks to space suits- has been enhanced by nano-scale robotics and sub-microscopic onboard computers. For the most part, these enhancements are minor and obsequious: a pair of athletic socks is laced with 'nano-silver' to absorb sweat and odor; if your best pair of khakis pops a seam, it will mend itself automatically within a few days. Onboard nano-colonies are designed to make your clothing more durable, more hygienic and much more comfortable to wear.

Microcomputers woven into the fabric, and powered by the wearer's own electromagnetic field allow clothing to change color, pattern, and even texture with a verbal command. A t-shirt or blazer can display high resolution, full motion graphics, allowing patterns to move and shift. Limited "dumb AI" computers built into everyday clothes are instructed to modulate an article's hue and tone to ensure the wearer always stands out in a crowd and is always wearing the most fashionable colors for current lighting conditions. Advertisers and political activists proudly display their causes and clients, while subliminal patterns encoded on the cloth work to make the wearer seem more attractive, aggressive or important.

Most items of clothing in the Otherverse America campaign setting have the Livecloth enhancement. This gadget is omni-present in the Otherverse, as nanotechnology and its derivatives are a major part of the setting.

Armor Gadget: Livecloth (PL 7)

Nano-active fabric is expensive, but amazingly useful, capable of being woven into a number of interesting forms. Civilian Livecloth fashion accentuates sensuality and seduction, allowing nano-active clothes to flash tantalizing glimpses of forbidden skin. Proud mothers show real-time sonogram images of their gestating children. Gynecologic analysis tags built into t-shirts proudly display colorful sexual census data. Self-sterilizing fabrics are used in hospitals across the planet.

The military favors Livecloth uniforms for their durability and their ability to transform into high concealment civilian clothes within a few seconds, both ideal capabilities for a covert operative.

Virtually any clothing can be tailored from live cloth. Livecloth can change shape, style and texture, as well as display high-resolution, full motion images specified by the wearer. Livecloth is self-sterilizing, and requires little maintenance, and can regenerate minor rips and tears within a few hours.

Purchase DC Modifier: +3 (+1 in Otherverse America campaign setting)
Restriction: None.

Natural fibers are rare, mostly as a consequence of the failure of large-scale agribusiness. Most 22nd Century clothing is produced artificially; limited matter replication technology has allowed weavers to produce artificial cotton and hemp analogues almost indistinguishable from the real substance. These synthetics have all the traits of natural fibers, but have never actually touched the soil. Actual natural fiber clothing is prohibitively expensive- only celebrities, world leaders and millionaires boast natural fiber wardrobes.

Massive swarms of genetically modified orb weaver spiders and silkworms are used as living looms to produce hundreds of miles of durable fabric per day. Spider farms can produce more fabric than an entire pre-millennium cotton plantation from a working floor only the size of a small office building. Human involvement is minimal; industrial robots can be programmed to care for the spiders and harvest the silk quickly and cheaply. Towering spider farm towers, home to literally billions of genetically altered arachnids, are a common sight in most 22nd Century American cities.

Schoolchildren are allowed to tour spider farms on group trips, and as an un-intended consequence of the spidersilk industry, arachnophobia is relatively rare. Spiders are seen as helpful, industrious beasts, working in symbiosis with humanity, not as predators. Many Mesh 'toons feature heroic spider protagonists, while tarantulas and wolf spiders are growing in popularity as pets. Many homes include small spiderfarms of their own and produce spidersilk garments and cloth as a hobby. A spiderfarm the size of a refrigerator may host thousands of spiders, and these items are common sights on apartment balconies and on city rooftops.

Starting Occupation: Spiderfarm Hobbyist

You have a personal spiderfarm, which is home to several thousand genetically engineered orb weaver spiders. As a profitable and soothing hobby, you care for your spidery micro-farm, spending hours adjusting feed and light mixtures, hoping to produce the absolute best spidersilk harvest. Sometimes you can sell the spidersilk at a nice profit to local boutiques, or you can use the superior fabric for your own ends.

Prerequistes: Age 14+

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Computer Use, Craft (visual arts), Handle Animal, Knowledge (art, business, earth & life sciences, streetwise, technology), Perform (stringed instruments), Profession, Search, Survival

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

Reputation Bonus Increase: +0

Spidersilk garments are cheap and widely available; the durable fabric is seen as superior to synthe-cotton, and high dollar business suits and elegant ladies gowns are made from the fabric. Brides wear exquisitely cut spider-silk gowns to their weddings, but the fabric has another application. When properly layered, spidersilk is stronger than steel at a fraction of the weight, making the fabric attractive as body armor. Most forms of light body armor incorporate a spidersilk/ballistic fiber weave, under the trade name Kevlar II. This type of armor is common as a protective underlayer in most suits of Power Armor, and forms the core of many suits of ultra-light combat "skin suits".

Metahumans aren't the only people wearing armor.

Post-War America is always balanced on the edge of violence. Most clothing is designed to be durable to stand up to a flash riot or street brawl. In addition to defensive smartlights and other highly concealable protections, many Americans carry a light flack jacket or second hand (or third hand) urban assault armor in their cars or balled up in a backpack. Thirty years of war means a huge amount of military surplus hardware flooding the marketplace. Though owning combat armor remains illegal in many jurisdictions, enforcement of anti-armor laws is considered a low priority. Many officers, whether for political reasons, or just out of a desire for normal citizens to have some protection from metahuman violence, look the other way on the subject of personal body armor.

To reflect how common personal body armor is in the Otherverse, reduce the base purchase DC of all PL 5 body armor, described in the D20 Modern Core Rules by -2. The armor's restriction rating (if any) is unchanged. These older, but still reliable, forms of armor are available at most military surplus stores and pawn shops, and many 22nd Century teens own a suit of body armor stolen or inherited from a soldier parent.

The emergence of super-human Combat Types and military cyborgs has done more than make armor a necessity; these military icons have become inspirations for fashion. Both Lifer and Choicer fashion industries take their inspiration from the military. Many articles of clothing have a militaristic, multi-functional feel. Web-belts and combat harnesses are common accessories. Many civilian fashions incorporate the sleek, aerodynamic style of spidersilk combat armor, and in many cases, skin-tight combat armor is juxtaposed against tailored synthetic fabrics. Hardened armor sections are both practical and stylish, and many outfits include polymer chainmail hauberks.

Intangibles: What's in Their Pockets?

Virtually every character depicted in this sourcebook carries **a lot** of gear, and most battle costumes incorporate load bearing vests, pockets and web belts. So what are the men and women of Otherverse America carrying, anyway?

Life support gear: Even ordinary civilians likely carry a Spray Suit or conventional gas mask/rebreather combo; most also carry anti-toxin self injectors designed to counteract the most common forms of bio-warfare. With smartlight psi-viruses becoming a more common terror weapon, many civilians carry the same protective devices used by the military- typically a specially designed pair of sunglasses or goggles.

Electronics: Most computing devices and personal electronics are either smartlight based or implanted cybernetics; with the exception of the very poor, few citizens of 2107 carry a conventional 'hard-tech' cellphone. However, most people carry 'hardened' data storage devices as an emergency backup, in case their smartlight laptop is destroyed by an EMP or Smartlance.

Tools: Having a shape-memory muli-tool in a pocket is always a good idea. Of course, most characters can always find a use for a disposable camera or flashlight, even in the 22nd century. Volunteer activists on both sides carry rolls of holofoil stickers to mark their turf, as well as palm-sized mini-printers designed to quickly generate new tags and placards. Pen-sized tubes of ultra concentrated spray paint are a lower tech, but just as effective a substitute. Soldiers naturally carry spare ammo clips, spare batteries for their energy weapons, a back-up radio or cell-communicator, a hands free Bluetooth headset, and maybe a few zipline handcuffs, if they're planning on taking prisoners.

Religious Items: The neo-pagans of the Covenant carry ceremonial athemes tucked into their belts or worn on a hip scabbard. Fetishes and icons, some elaborate and others primitive and cheaply made are worn as jewelry or carried as good luck charms. Even the Lifers carry mementoes of their faith and their movement, which can either take the form of traditional religious items like crosses, or can be more personal souvenirs. Often, a young Lifer will carry their mentor's dogtags, or a shell casing from their first successful combat-rescue as a good luck charm.

Food: Fighting the Abortion War is hungry work, especially for metahuman soldiers with their heightened metabolisms. Most Powered Heroes and Combat Types have voracious appetites and very low body fat percentages. Even the most petite Powered can out eat a starving race horse. Most Powereds carry a few high calorie ration bars in a belt pocket, and so do many ordinary humans.

Scarification and the Cyberculture

Unscarred skin has become a symbol of inexperience, even cowardice and apathy to the citizens of the 22nd Century. After three decades of house-to-house warfare and insurgency, very few Americans lack scars and brands. The adults and elders of the War-era generation live and work in 2107's cities, shoehorned back into civilian life after having seen and done great and terrible things. Their cyber-system replacement limbs and scars are badges of honor and symbols of their combat service.

Elective cyberization is common, and most of 2107's citizens have at least an implanted credit card or data reader. Cybernetic weapons and tools are almost as common, and cyborgs (as well as other combat-designed metahumans) are held as a variant standard of human beauty. The world's fashion industry, like the meta-porn industry, makes huge profits catering to the needs of cyber-ed consumers.

Many of the modern era's children and older teenagers may have been too young to officially serve during the War, but many still bear scars of their own. Burn scars, shrapnel wounds and other injuries are common, especially among those who grew up in the worst, most war-torn neighborhoods.

Intentional and ritual scarification is likewise common. Though cosmetic techniques and dermal regeneration are available, and far more advanced than anything 21st century plastic surgery had to offer, most modern soldiers refuse to have anything other than the most extreme wounds regenerated. Covenant fencing clubs and dueling circles ritually scar their members with their athemes, earning a dueling *schiess* is an important part of a Covenant fencer's first battle.

Believers on both sides scar and tattoo themselves in accordance with their traditions. Choicer men and women endure elaborate scars on their faces and dominant hands, to remember the sacrifices their parents made during the war, and in memoriam for pagans murdered throughout history. On the other side of the country, Lifer believers scar themselves to symbolize the horror of abortion, or in memory of fallen rescuers. Being so common, among every strata of society, even facial scarification and tattooing no longer carries any social or economic stigma.

Many of 2107's most committed citizens have chosen the Meaningful Ink feat.

Choicer Fashions

Even during the worst days of the War, the Choicer military never lost their sense of beauty. Virtually every piece of Choicer combat gear, from the nation's tanks and combat exo-suits on down to the infantry's all-weather socks and hiking boots, incorporate common decorative motifs and pagan-inspired design elements. When a Choicer unit wants to perform a deniable op, they use off the shelf gear rather than their own unique war-tech.

Choicer defense contractors (even non-pagan armament companies tailoring their products to their client) incorporate protective spells and defensive runes woven into the fabric, often on a molecular level.

Hardened armor is imbedded with microscopic fetishes- a few cellular samples of rowan or oak or wolfsbane, single crystals of salt, or iron from a storied cauldron. Woven into the fabric on a molecular level, most of the subtle magiks are invisible to the naked eye, only visible under ultra-magnification or under alternative light sources. Other items are decorated with AI-sketched designs based on the atomic structure of these fetish items. More obvious pagan symbols and totems are incorporated as maker's mark, corporate logos and unit patches.

Armor Gadget: Paganized (PL 6)

Clothing which incorporates ritual elements on a molecular level is referred to as being 'paganized', a reference to the population which most often buys such articles. If your Otherverse America campaign incorporates modern magic elements and spell casting, wearing a paganized item provides the wearer with the equivalent of the

Eschew Materials Metamagic feat.

While wearing a paganized item, the wearer can ignore material component requirements, provided the material component has a Purchase DC of 3 or less. Effectively, the arcane substances encoded into the clothing's atomic structure act as a replacement material component. A spellcaster wearing a paganized item might be covered with minor static-like discharges whenever she casts spells.

Note: Any form of clothing or body armor, including powered armor, can be paganized. While this armor gadget is common in the Otherverse America campaign setting, it is chosen more as a status symbol and ritual element, since few (if any) actual spellcasters exist in that setting.

Purchase DC Modifier: +1

Restriction: None.

Many Choicer civilians wear blood red, elbow length gloves or crimson wraps around their hands in imitation of, and showing solidarity with their cybernetically enhanced Midwife caste. Red is a dominant color in Choicer designs, symbolizing the blood of childbirth and menstruation, as well as the blood shed by Choicer combat vets during the War. Choicer clothing design emphasizes femininity and grace, and partial nudity has become acceptable in Choicer society. Many civilian designs bare a woman's breasts, and in the case of some naturally bullet-proof metahumans, so do some styles of combat armor.

Though a relentlessly high-tech culture, the Choicer Covenant intentionally incorporates primitive and handcrafted elements into their clothing. Weaving and handcrafts are common hobbies in Choicer America, and many homes include an AI-assisted loom or fabrication machine. Handcrafted wooden prayer beads, stone fetishes and modern interpretations of ancient metal holy symbols are all common.

Many religiously observant Choicers carry athemes – a ceremonial dagger used in pagan ceremonies. In many traditions, an atheme is never used for practical purposes, and the blade is kept blunted. Hardline Choicer sects have developed a devastating martial arts style based on wielding a razor edged atheme in combat. Athemes are often ceramic or white steel, though some priestesses choose to carry a high tech, energy-bladed athemes.

Combat Weight Atheme: Traditional pagan thought holds that a witch's atheme should never be used to cut anything physical and never to commit an act of violence. Combat weighted athemes are products of a different, more martial tradition, which believes that faith must be defended and protected with blades.

Combat Weight Athemes are considered masterwork knives, receiving a +1 masterwork bonus on attack and damage rolls. These finely balanced blades are designed for fencing and silent combat. An atheme's blade is white ceramic, with a dense, durable polymer hilt. Even combat weight athemes incorporate decorative and ritualistic elements. Many Choicer special forces groups carry combat athemes with dull grey or matte black ferro-ceramic blades.

Warhammer: Devotees of the Norse gods are a powerful voice within the Choicer military. Ásatrú neo-pagans are one of the stongest, best organized male voting blocs within the movement; the worship of Thor and His divine kin has become a refuge for male believers within the mostly matriarchial Covenant.

Devotees of Thor and Odin often carry a shorthandled warhammer, with a striking face of stone or specially prepared poly-steel, rather than a traditional atheme. The intimidating weapon has a hilt wrapped in leather and cloth prayer strips. Some worshippers decorate the hammer's thong with rune-inscribed beads or raven feathers, in honor of Odin's twin ravens.

Choicer Melee Weapons	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Combat Weight Atheme (PL 5)	1d4+1	19-20/x2	Slashing	10 ft thrown	Tiny	1 - 1.5 lb	9	-
Warhammer (PL 5)	1d8	20/x2	Bludgeoning	-	Med	3 - 3.5 lbs	8	-

Escort's Vest: The heavy, bullet proof vests worn by volunteer clinic defenders and patient escorts have been an icon of the pro-choice movement since the early 1980s. Most defenders are forced to make do with improvised, homemade or self-purchased armor, but some well equipped clinics offer their staff and patients more durable body armor.

A typical Escort's Vest is a bulky Kevlar II armored vest, with integrated groin protector and gorget, reinforced with drop-in poly-steel or ceramic plates. Most of these vests are painted an eye-popping yellow or orange, and are designed with nearly a dozen large equipment pockets spread across the breast plate and hips. Choicer slogans and designs are sewn into the armor, often with illuminated fiber optic threads. High visibility, not stealth, is the name of the game.

Some Escort Vests are fitted with a Medi-comp sensor system, allowing a clinic director to know instantly if one of her volunteer defenders or patients is wounded during a protest. Choicer infantry and tank crews are equipped with an undecorated, matte grey or urban cammo pattern Escort Vest equipped with an integrated cellphone / Mesh-link and Medi-comp system.

Bleeding By Choice

The Choicer nation embraces menstruation as a potent symbol of womanhood. Though the medical-technology to eliminate menstruation completely has existed for nearly a century, there is an unspoken expectation that not only will Choicer women accept their monthly flows, but also glory in it. Choicer martial arts and object philosophies teach students to embrace menstruation as a time of power and vitality. The Choicer black ops community plans its missions around their blood cycles; Bastian assassins go to battle when they are bleeding, because that is when they are at their strongest.

Hormonally responsive nano-tattoos decorate many young Choicer women. These tattoos react to a woman's changing body chemistry, and their designs shift and fluoresce when the woman is pregnant or menstruating. These tattoos are often incredibly intricate webs of ink, so delicate and so incredibly multilayered that they are applied by machines rather than human artists. The Choicer fashion for facial tattooing means that many Choicer women of childbearing age display incredibly intricate line work around their mouth and eyes for only a few days out of each month.

Choicer Body Armor	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonproficient Bonus	Max DEX Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft)	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction Rating
Escort's Vest	Med tactical	+5	+2	+1	-4	25 ft	8 lbs	12 (DC 23 Medicomp)	-

Decision Red (PL 6)

Decision Red is tailored hormone and nutrient load designed to quickly and relatively painlessly induce menstruation, which is available over the counter. The drug is available in pill form or as an adhesive drug patch worn on the abdomen or inner thigh. An adult, humanoid woman who uses the drug will begin her menstrual cycle within hours of ingestion. The chemical has no measurable effects on males or nonhumanoids who ingest the drug. If used during the first 3-4 weeks of pregnancy, the hormones within the drug will induce a miscarriage.

Decision Red is a popular 22nd century drug, allowing women to decide when and how often they will menstruate. It is also extremely common among the blood feminists of the Chocier black ops community. Moonwise-trained soldiers use the chemical to induce empowering menstrual flows before a mission.

Decision Red can also be used to induce additional menstrual cycles in a woman. If used more than twice a month, the user must succeed at a DC 14 FORT Save or suffer 1d3 points of temporary CON damage as her body tries to adapt to the unnatural hormone surges and tissue irritation.

Purchase DC: 4
Restriction Rating: None

Lifer Fashions

Lifer clothes are chosen for both practical, rugged urban use and for their symbolic value. Lifer culture is an evangelical culture, and most Lifers see it as their God-given duty to witness to non-believers. A Lifer's clothing is just another opportunity for witnessing. Lifer America is a country of symbols and hidden meanings. Holofoil tattoos, smartlight advertisements and nano-active Livecloth t-shirts display a continual loop of propaganda and pro-life imagery. A Lifer school child's lunchbox and backpack may display an endless loop of happy, smiling babies, a Lifer businessman's lapel pin is probably a psychoactive version of the nation's famed Sigil.

The Sigil is the most famous emblem of the Lifer nation and faith. An extreme stylization of the Virgin of Guadalupe, this icon appears on everything from corporate stationary to unit patches. The colorful and instantly recognizable Sigil has become the dominant symbol of Evangelical Christianity, supplanting the older symbols of the cross and fish. The Sigil is omnipresent in Lifer culture; its harder to find a piece of Lifer gear or a Lifer-run business that doesn't display the Sigil than one that does.

The Lifer nation is a culture obsessed with death, and most Lifer clothing incorporates a strong gothic and funeral influence. Lifers wear black and gray to symbolize their culture's endless period of mourning, for both the country's 'murdered preborn' and the previous generation of Lifer martyrs. They wear purple as a symbol of their nation and its military. Lifer mecha and power armor are decorated with ultra high-rez plasma displays, which blare Lifer ideology mixed with subliminals and thought-viruses. These symbols are obvious, but less obvious symbols abound.

Padlocks and light, decorative chains are often worn as belts, necklaces and accessories. Early pro-lifers used ‘padlock rescues’ to blockade abortion clinics, chaining themselves to the building’s doors with durable bike chains. As technology changed, the tactic has fallen out of favor (though any true Termite knows the history of padlock rescues and their place in the movement), but the style remains.

Many young Lifers shun the traditional symbols of their nation in favor of simple black, purple or crimson chokers and half masks (including occasionally armored half-masks or gas masks) covering their nose and mouth. These accessories symbolize the silenced pre-born, and have the practical benefit of concealing the wearer’s identity if street violence breaks out. Older Lifers, of both genders, sometimes cover their faces with dark veils rather than bandit-style masks.

Beauty itself is a strange concept in Lifer country. The Lifer army fields some of the most terrifyingly mutated and massive war-cyborgs and Combat Types ever devised. These lethal and heavily armed bio-mechanical goliaths are viewed as champions of the movement, national heroes who have given up their flesh and blood bodies to save the pre-born and take the fight back to the Choicers. T-shirts display the images of these heavily armored warriors, while Lifer body armor reflects the styling of famed soldiers.

Lifer clothing reflects the processes of life and death. Thanks to nanoactive components, Lifer fashion can duplicate the rhythmic pulses of naked muscle fiber, or the slow pulse of a simulated fetal heartbeat. Some Lifer clothes and combat costumes resemble bio-mechanical nightmares, while others embrace the symbols of death. Skeletal and organic motifs are common. Some cyber-enhanced Lifers have undergone cosmetic reconstruction, replacing some or all of their skin with transparent silicon analogues, revealing the organs beneath the flesh, or incorporate decorative implants that give them an undead, zombie-like appearance.

Zombie Style (PL 7)

Zombie Style is a commercial response to the death and gore obsessed Lifer subculture. Inspired by George Romero movies and the natural process of decay, Zombie Style is a system of minor, body wide cosmetic surgeries and nano-implants. Zombie Style lowers the cyborg’s body temperature, alters the color and texture of the skin to resemble a rotting corpse. Gory but sterile ichor can drip from artifical wounds- in reality well crafted ports in the cyborg’s ‘unliving’ skin.

With a little concentration, a cyborg can play dead very effectively- the implant slows breathing to eliminates involuntary muscle movements, such as blinking. As a full round action, a zombie-cyborg can deactivate or reactivate the implant, regaining normal human appearance.

Drain: 0.5
Type: Internal
Hardness/Hit Points: -/2
Base Purchase DC: 19
Restriction: None

Other Lifer sects favor a modest, drab style which that rejects the theatricality and gothic influence of the modern Lifer movement. Traditionalist Lifer men wear simple homespun buttoned shirts and heavy, dark trousers, while long gray and purple dresses cover their women from throat to toes. Many Lifer traditionalists make their own clothes, using home spiderfarms to produce durable and modest armor wear. Though resembling the attire of an 19th Century Quaker more than anything modern, these unadorned shirts and dresses are designed to withstand small arms fire, a necessity for a terrorist nation fighting an undeclared war. Among these modest and uncostumed Lifers, the cross retains its power as a symbol, having never lost its place in the culture to the Sigil.

However, across the breadth of Lifer culture, pregnant women are held as the epitome of female beauty; Lifer culture teaches its women that they are never more beautiful than when they're swollen with child. Women's fashion is designed to emphasize the curve of belly and breasts, and even relatively modest groups within the subculture might bear a glimpse of cleavage. Lifer girls bind and pad their clothes to give themselves a lusher, more voluptuous figure.

New Allegiance: Baby, Belly, Blankets
Type: Publicly traded international corporation
Incorporation Year: 2024
Corporate Motto: Everything for the most beautiful babies in the world.

Baby, Belly Blankets Inc is one of the largest, and wealthiest Lifer run megacorporations on the planet, and make record-breaking profits each year by attending to the special needs of the Lifer nation. The corporation's franchise stores are a common sight in Lifer neighborhoods- elegant baby boutiques and value-conscious discount clothing and necessity stores, all decorated with free floating smartlight displays of smiling babies playing inside of computer generated smoke bubbles.

Baby, Belly Blankets stores sell the biggest names in children's clothing, the brands that are status symbols for Lifer parents. Though the company has never funded terrorism directly, it is enmeshed firmly in Lifer culture. The company gladly accepts the Coalition For Life's veteran benefit cards, and local stores provide supplies of disposable diapers, formula and other consumables to new parents free of charge.

Corporate lobbyists contribute millions to the Lifer cause each year, and Baby Belly Blankets stores are filled with mild and mostly inoffensive anti-abortion literature as well as anti-contraception pamphlets labeled 'pro-motherhood'.

Membership Prerequistes: Knowledge: popular culture 4 ranks, Creative

Membership Benefit: Employees at all levels of Baby, Belly, Blankets are trained to use ad techniques and memetic triggers specifically tailored to urban Lifer psychology. Talking to a committed BBB employee is often a confusing exchange of buzzwords and sanitized pro-life talking points rather than a real dialogue.

BBB employees receive a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Profession checks made against or in reference to anyone sharing any pro-life or Lifer allegiance.

Future Fabric: New Clothing Gadgets

The following gadgets are built into most clothing and armor available for purchase in the Otherverse America campaign setting. The following gadgets can be added to any form of clothing, and most forms of armor, including powered armor.

Gadget: Demographic Cloth (PL 6)

Demographic cloth is tailored specifically to the genetic profile of its wearer or to a specific, genetically similar target market. Demographic cloth takes advances in 'smart fabrics', which respond to the needs of their wearers to an entirely new level. The demographic cloth is an artificial symbiotic lifeform that feeds on the fatigue toxins produced by the wearer's body and returns nutrients lost in the sweat to the wearer.

Each demographic cloth piece of clothing is tailored towards the physiological needs of a specific race, gender and age category. Thus you might buy a nicely tailored demographic cloth business suit designed to be worn by a "venerable, black male" or a demographic cloth camisole intended to be worn by a "Hispanic female child" or virtually any other combination.

If the cloth is worn by someone who does not meet all three criteria, it is merely an ordinary article of clothing. If worn by someone who meets all three criteria, the demographic clothing provides minor physical enhancement. The wearer receives a +1 bonus on FORT saves made to perform feats of endurance, as well as all FORT saves made to resist drugs or toxins.

Any article of clothing or armor can be enhanced by the addition of Demographic Cloth. A person can only benefit from wearing one piece of demographic clothing at a time, regardless of how much of his wardrobe is enhanced.

Purchase DC Modifier: +2
Restriction: None

Gadget: Ferro-responsive (PL 6)

Ferro-responsive cloth is a corporate response to government demands for security. Most 22nd Century clothing is impregnated with ferro-repsonsive nanotech, as are most purses, handbags, backpacks and other luggage. Ferro-responsive technology was invented during the mid 2040s, but set on the shelf until after the Treaty of Boston was signed in 2091. Today, its harder to find non Ferro-responsive clothing than it is to buy F-R cloth, and almost all American school districts require their students carry F-R purses and bags.

F-R cloth is impregnated with microscopic iron fibers. When a mild electrical current is passed through the cloth, these micro fibers resonate. If any mass of metal larger than a few coins is concealed within the cloth, it emits a low and continual chime, and any F-R cloth touching the metal phosphoresces for as long as the current is maintained.

In addition to conventional weapons detectors, most 22nd Century public buildings have emitters which generate a continual 1-2 micro-watt electrical field. This field is undetectable by ordinary human senses, but any F-R cloth entering the field begins to resonate. If anyone wearing or carrying an F-R items is concealing a weapon, the cloth will glow, revealing the concealed item.

Purchase DC Modifier: -2. Government subsidies and price controls means it's cheaper to buy F-R laced clothing than to purchase non-FR clothing. The only place to reliably find non F-R items are in Lifer neighborhoods, where the citizens have no great love for the Fed-Gov or its cloying 'public security' measures.
Restriction: None

Gadget: Processor-Linked (PL 7)

Processor-linked clothing incorporates nano-scale computers and ultra-low range wireless receivers woven throughout the fabric. Processor-linked clothing enables a wearer to squeeze more performance out of nearby computers and computer-guided vehicles by providing the devices with more free memory and processing capacity.

Processor-linked clothing wirelessly links with all nearby computer systems, and assumes some of their processing duties. The wearer must be within 5-10 ft of the computer system, and must have already accessed the device, either legitimately or via hacking. Anyone wearing a suit of Processor-Linked clothing receives a +1 bonus on all Computer Use checks and on Drive and Pilot checks made concerning computer controlled vehicles.
Base Purchase DC Modifier: +3
Restriction: None

Armament Wear

Both sides wear specially designed clothes intended to transmit subliminal messages, thought viruses and assist the wearer in hacking the human mind. These innovative, psy-op capable items of clothing are referred to generally as Armament Wear. They are not quite weapons in the same way a knife or a rail gun is, use Armament Wear is none-the-less a potentially hostile act.

The following gadgets can be added to any form of clothing and most forms of armor, including powered armor.

Gadget: Agemask Cloth (PL 6)

Agemask Cloth is an outgrowth of gerontological and developmental psychological research, and uses computer guided patterning and AI-seamstress weaving to produce cloth that looks different to viewers of different ages. Agemask Fabric is molecularly painted with colors that are only clearly visible to those in a specific age bracket; older or younger viewers see a blurry, cryptic image or a solid block of color.

Agemask cloth cannot hide a person, so it is ineffective in stealth technology, but it is a common fashion item. An Agemask t-shirt can bear a message easily read by the young, but which devolves into a cryptic jumble of colors when an older person attempts to read it. An Agemask gown can go transparent when viewed by adults, giving them a clear view of the nude form beneath the gown, but appear solid and modest to younger eyes.

Each piece of Agemask clothing has a specific appearance, visible only to those within a single age bracket: Child, Young Adult, Adult, Middle Aged, Old and Venerable. Members of any other age bracket do not see the fabric as it appears and must succeed at a DC 18 Spot check to read any concealed message or see the item's 'true' coloration.

This is a scientifically engineered optical illusion, not a magical or mind influencing effect.

Base Purchase DC Modifier: +2

Restriction: None.

Gadget: Charmweave (PL 6)

Charmweave patterns are machined by high-end fashion/psychology AIs. Charmweave fabric uses subliminal patterns, invisible to the naked eye, as well as emitting equally undetectable light pulses, which stimulate the portions of the human brain responsible for trust and recognition. Charmweave cloth uses its unique and subtle properties to stimulate feelings of trust and comfort in viewers. Charmweave fabric is omnipresent in the business and political realm, and though wearing a suit of Charmweave fabric is seen as a cynical political ploy, the technology provides a minor, but tangible benefit during negotiations.

A creature wearing a suit of Charmweave clothing receives a +1 enhancement bonus to all CHA-based skill checks. This bonus does not apply when interacting with mindless creatures, non-sentient robots and constructs, nor when interacting with creatures immune to mind influencing effects.

Base Purchase DC Modifier: +3

Restriction: None

Gadget: Charmweave Generation II (PL 7)

In addition to the effects of first generation Charmweave, this more advanced form of Armament wear generates a short-lived thought-virus (an artificially generated telepathic projection designed to manipulate victims).

Any sentient creature who interacts with the wearer of a Charmweave II article must succeed at a DC 14 WILL Save or become a carrier of a minor thought virus. This virus is spread through direct eye-to-eye contact, and those infected remain carriers for 12-18 hours. Anyone the carrier is exposed to must succeed at a DC 14 WILL save themselves, or find their starting attitude to the Charmweave II's wearer improved by one step. This attitude improvement remains in effect for an hour once contracted.

This attitude improvement occurs on a completely subconscious level, and those infected typically have no knowledge they have contracted a thought virus. If not contacted the Charmweave II wearer before the virus' lifespan runs out, the thought virus runs its course without effect. Ownership of Charmweave II is highly regulated; officially only the President, high ranking members of the American, Choicer and Lifer governments are allowed to use the technology, and only when the proper paperwork is filed. Unauthorized use of this technology is punished by heavy fines.

Purchase DC Modifier: +5

Restriction Rating: +2 (Restricted).

New Item: Dissonance Cowl (PL 6)

The Dissonance Cowl is a revolution in urban stealth and low-observability camouflage. Despite the device's name, it is not truly a cowl; instead it is a simple headband with a microprocessor and thumbnail sized battery worn behind the left ear, though many agents have miniaturized the device into a pair of designer sunglasses. Lifer versions of this technology are often styled to resemble ordinary protest masks or chokers.

The Dissonance Cowl conceals the wearer's identify more effectively than a full ski-mask, making it an ideal tool for operatives and assassins across the world. The Dissonance Cowl constantly emits light pulses undetectable to the human eye, but which cataclysmically disrupt the smooth functioning of the portions of the brain responsible for facial recognition.

Thus, you can be looking right at an agent wearing one of these Cowls, and not be able to describe a single detail of what his face looks like. If pressed, you might be able to hazard a guess as to race, but that's about it.

While the Cowl is activated, though the viewer perceives the true face beneath the electronic distortion, it simply does not register to his conscious mind, and is not stored into his memory. The Cowl does not affect the appearance of the wearer's clothes, size or non-facial features. An observer may still be able to identify someone using a Cowl by other means, such as identifying their voice, clothing or body language.

Wearing the Cowl provides a +15 equipment bonus on Disguise checks made to conceal your identity, but you may not attempt to imitate a specific person while wearing the Cowl. Viewers must succeed at a DC 25 WILL Save in order to perceive your true features beneath the electronic distortion. This is a non-magical optical illusion, and affect creatures otherwise immune to mind influencing effects.

The Cowl has no effect on observers looking through any form of electronic optics, such as closed circuit TV images, the view finder of a digital camera, or though an electronically enhanced weapon scope. Nor do photographs or recordings carry the visual distortion effect.

The Dissonance Cowl is a tiny object, weighing ½ lb. The Cowl, either in headband or sunglass form, has a Purchase DC of 28, and a Restriction Rating of Military (+3).

Gadget: Eros Shield (PL 6)

Unlike conventional body armor, Eros Shield items use psychology, not anti-ballistic layering to keep a wearer alive. An Eros Shield blouse uses light-based neurological manipulation and psycho disruptive subliminals woven into the fabric to protect the wearer. Invisible cues act on the portions of the brain responsible for lust and sexual desire, while at the same time disrupting gross motor control and skewing reflexes.

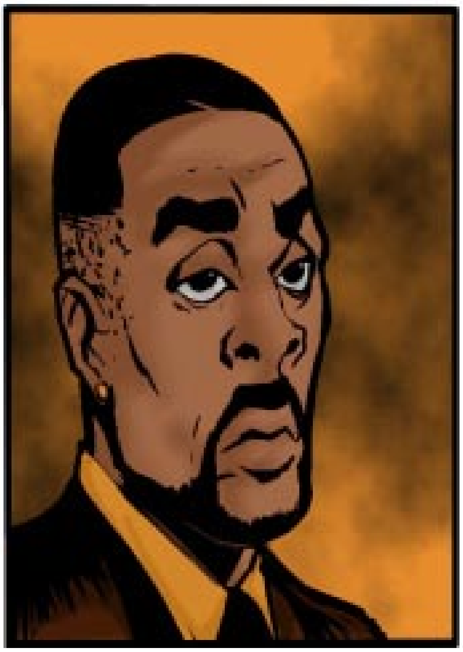
Eros Shield articles provide the wearer with a +1 luck bonus to Defense when engaged in melee combat with any sentient creature who would normally find the wearer's species and gender sexually attractive. Effectively, the Eros Shield distracts the attacker just enough they don't fight as effectively and subconsciously hold back when fighting the wearer. This is a non-magical mind influencing effect, and will not function if the attacker cannot clearly see the wearer.

Purchase DC Modifier: +4

Restriction: +1 (Licensed.)

Gadget: Spartan Gel (PL 6)

Spartan Gel body stockings were first patented during the early 2010s, and were designed to allow paraplegics to walk again. The body suit could be worn comfortably under every day clothing, and supported and stabilized the patient's body. Similar military technology is designed to enhance the capabilities of healthy soldiers, enabling them to carry heavier loads. By 2107, Spartan Gel technology has migrated from a separate physique enhancing undergarment into an integral part of many articles of clothing. Mechanics, construction workers, laborers and other working-class citizens whose jobs require brawn wear Spartan Gel jumpsuits as a



matter of course. In most jurisdictions, police uniforms are Spartan Gel, as are most military 'uniforms of the day' and light combat skin suits.

Spartan Gel fabric is much heavier and significantly thicker than ordinary cloth. Microscopic nano-machines contained in a viscous liquid medium, permeate every inch of the fabric. The Spartan Gel's onboard micro-computers analyze their wearer's movement and peripheral neural activity, and constantly adjust the shape and consistency of the liquid layer within the fabric. By flexing a specially reinforced bodysuit around a paralyzed wearer's limb, the Spartan Gel can give the wearer the illusion of normal mobility, or can be used to increase the physical capabilities of healthy wearers. The gel can harden instantly in response to muscular contraction, increasing a wearer's speed and load-carrying capacities, as the gel-reinforced uniform bears some of the wearer's muscular burden.

A character wearing a set of Spartan Gel clothing receives a +1 enhancement bonus to either his STR or DEX score. This makes the fabric's technology more desirable to roughly half the population, and provides only minor benefit to everyone else. A character can only benefit from a single Spartan Gel body suit at any given time.

Purchase DC Modifier: +3 STR Enhancing, +4 DEX Enhancing

Restriction: Licensed (+1)

Gadget: Warlight (PL 6)

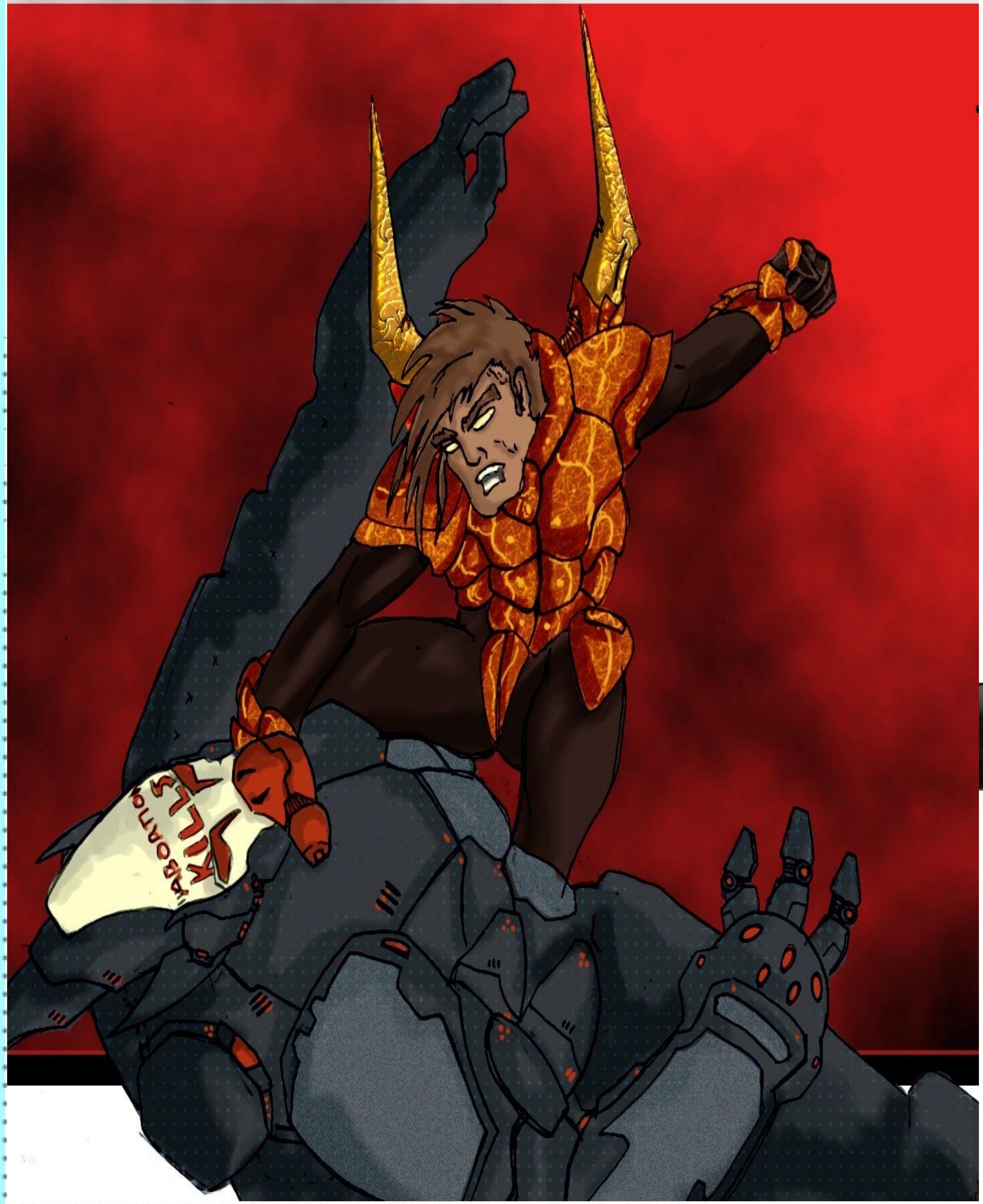
Warlight clothing functions on the same principle as Charmweave clothing, but applies the technology to an opposite end. Using light frequencies which induce paranoia and irritability, Warlight clothing sparks aggression and violence. Warlight fabric is illegal in many jurisdictions, though it is often worn by rioters and instigators, as well as special forces operatives attempting to sow discord during an undercover mission. Warlight enhanced t-shirts, bearing images intentionally offensive to both Lifer and Choicers are sold in the US through the subcultural 'gray-market' retailer Blastocyst.

They are popular among American teens, especially those who've rejected both groups.

All Diplomacy checks made within 30 ft of a character wearing a suit of Warlight enhanced clothing suffer a -2 penalty. If a character cannot clearly see the Warlight enhanced suit does not suffer this penalty.

Base Purchase DC Modifier: +2

Restriction Rating: +3 (Illegal)


ABORTION
KILLS

Midsummer Night, 2089.
San Francisco, CA.
Choicer Territory.

Blue light was everywhere that night.

It was the soft, dim and wavering blue of a Caribbean ocean at midnight, of sapphire sheets in darkness, of bar room neon. The blue light glistened on dew covered leaves, it cast long shadows across the park's grass. It turned brown skins a deep, shadow-slick mahogany and tinted pale skin in a dozen shades of cobalt. Tankhill Park was bathed in blue. San Francisco was bathed in blue; tonight, it was easy to imagine that all of America had been bathed in blue.

Blue tinted night, blue tinted world.

It was the Choicer holiday of Midsummer, and the blue tinted world was a fairy place, a half-world of flickering blue lights and dancing holographic fey. For Steve Mortari and his rambunctious, ten and eleven year old crew, it was a perfect night to pretend to be a fighter pilot , or a Shell jockey or a Powered supersoldier. It was a perfect night to run through blue and play out (or practice, in that instictive way children have of practicing for the future) air-to-air combat.

The brown haired boy and his blond brother run through the park with their friends, shouting and laughing and mimicking rail-gun explosions. They argued about who hit who first, and Cassie, the tomboy, the one with the most books on Shell suits and combat cyborgs yelled the loudest. Like always, she absolutely knew nobody could knock her out of the sky. With a yelp of triumph, she shot down Fabian, and he went down with a grimace on his face that said he knew he was ejecting over Lifer airspace, and that he knew the Lifers ate their prisoners alive. Fabian fell, laughing hard, out of breath from the chase, and everything was blue around him.

Across the park, their parents were watching the annual production of a Midsummer Night's Dream in the open air theater. Fabian listened to the music drifting across the green, almost drowned out by the laughter of crowd. The chase forgotten for the moment, he stared up, through the branches, at the night sky. Few stars were visible through the haze of blue city-light. But it was still a good night. A Sunday Truce, a Midsummer Festival. Fabian's mom and dad were Am-Catholic, not Choicer Goddess-sworn, like Cassie's mom was, but they still brought him to the festivals.

As his gang of friends settled into grass beside him, Fabian decided the Choicers had the best holidays. Especially this one. The Lifers had agreed to a 48 hour cease-fire, just like the Choicers always agreed to at Christmas for the Lifers. Cassie acted bored with it all, like she missed hearing the helicopters and the Shell Suits rumble over head, but he knew even she was enjoying the night…. Even if Steve and Joey kept arguing with her that yes, a Diana 602 could too lock onto a Judgment!

The arguments were half-hearted, at best, and the children listened to the faint music coming from across the park. After a little while, the children rose and stretched and laughed together. The game of chase had faded back into the blue, and the children started to wander back to the light and laughter of the small theater. They were in no hurry; Cassie had seen this same play every year since she was born, because her mom was Covenant, and the others had seen it almost as often.

And so it was Cassie who set the pace, and the direction, though Steve definitely backed her up. Why cut straight through the park, when they could clamber up the hill, towards the source of the blue. Towards the one place their parents (even Cassie's militantly, proudly Choicer mom) told them never to play too near: the Tankhill Feminist Women's Health Center. Up the low, sloping hill. Up to the abortion clinic.

They didn't expect gore, not really (despite what they'd heard from some of their class mates, or had seen on the propaganda screens of Lifer war mechs), and gore wasn't the purpose. No zombies or dead babies or blood, even if the distant possibility that maybe, just maybe they'd see those things thrilled them just a little bit.

For Cassie, it was another chance to see what she wanted to be when she grew up. Not a doctor, not really, because medicine kinda bored her (even if the doctors had really cool bionic arms….) but to be a Defender. For her, it was always capital "D". To see the women in their gleaming gold and blood-red armor, to see the Shells patrolling beneath the blue umbra of the forcefield…. For Cassie, like always, it was all about the machines.

The others followed out of friendship, out of curiosity, and even out of bravado. All the children, even Cassie with her tech-obsession, were fascinated, in their childish but brilliant way, by the place. They'd seen it on the news, during Rescues and riots, seen it (and the other clinics around San Francisco) besieged by metahuman soldiers, but they'd never seen the clinic –any clinic- in person. It was always too dangerous, too much risk of an attack, too much risk of a bomb, or a thought-virus, or something. A truth too dangerous to see.

But tonight? On this blue night, where you could hear Shakespeare floating on the wind, when the cicadas were out in force, and when there hadn't been a helicopter gunship in the sky all night? The Lifers wouldn't try to bomb the place or anything tonight, would they? There was a Sunday Truce, and it looked like it was holding. Tonight might be their only chance to actually see what the Abortion War was all about, at least until they were older and went to fight it for themselves.

And so, the climb. Up through the neatly manicured trees, towards that wavering blue light, past graffiti-covered granite statues of fallen Choicer superheroes, gnarled and choked with kudzu. They were hushed as they reached the highmount of Tankhill Park, expecting revelations within that pulsing blue light.

The abortion clinic was just a place, just another place. The Tankhill clinic was an older one, from back before the days of the Covenant, so its architecture was square and solid and practical. It was an office building at night, when most of the staff had long since gone home. Not a place of shape shifting polymer walls or soaring minarets, not like the clinics they had all seen on the Mesh. It was just a building, bathed in blue.

The children had stepped out onto the rear lawn of the clinic, just beyond the non-secure parking area, where no cars were parked A holographic sign hovering just beside the narrow, bullet proof rear door advertised office hours and a 24 hour emergency Mesh-tag and asked people to "Please Vote Choicer", and that was it. The only thing exotic was the translucent blue hemisphere holding the clinic in its embrace, a screen of solid light an order of magnitude more bulletproof than that ancient door. Two women in red and gold powered armor strolled together beneath the field, only glancing briefly towards the children to confirm what their suit sensors had already told them: no threat.

Even the soldiers in their armor looked…. They looked like people doing a job. Both of the women had their face-plates open, and one yawned as she walked. She half waved at the kids, while her companion sneak-smoked a cigarette, the smoke from her lips sparkling cobalt beneath the force dome.

Just a place. This? People were fighting over this? Fabian's uncle lost a leg because of this? Three of the women at Cassie's covenhearth were dead because of this? This? The children looked at each other, but it was Cassie who took the lead. She stepped forward, hand reaching out to touch the blue dome, to feel it beneath her fingers. Her red hair stood on end as she touched the field, and her arm tingled.

A hand pressed against the field from the inside, and Cassie's face burst into a wide smile. Beneath the blue field, one of the clinic's golden armored defenders stretched out a hand, and made a little girl's day. The one that had waved at them earlier was less than a foot away from Cassie, close enough the girl could see the spiraling tattoos covering her cheeks, could see the sun-faded Choicer bumper stickers slapped onto her armor's shoulders, just above the unit patch, close enough to see the faint weld lines where the armor's breastplate had been put back together after taking a railgun hit…..

The soldier's voice over the clinic's external speakers shocked them, as she told them all to 'head on out, now' and shooed them away with a gauntleted hand. Cassie blinked, watched the two soldiers walk back towards the clinic, towards that narrow rear door. The smoker crushed her cigarette out between armored fingers and tossed the smoke towards an old plastic vase near the door. She made no move back down the hill, but the soldiers had already forgotten about the momentary distraction of she provided and didn't bother her. Cassie had seen a Shell up close, and had almost touched it…and she was so exalted by it all, by the closeness of her nameless heroines that she didn't hear the sound.

Joey did first, a few seconds before his near-twin did. A whine, and a crackle like the low roil of thunder. The blond kid turned back towards the stage, wondering if the sound system was going out or what, and shielded his eyes to try and get a better look. Steve raised a fat, bushy eyebrow, trying to figure out what his brother had said he'd heard. The whine got louder, and suddenly, they all could hear it. Even Cassie, who pulled her hand away from the abortion clinic's force field. It sounded like a hover-car with a misaligned float-matrix, like a badly maintained air conditioner starting up, like an old computer being turned on after being shoved into a closet for three years. The whine filled the air, and the thunder-like roar grew louder, more constant.

It took a second that lasted an eternity to figure out where it was coming from, and than the children looked upward at last, into the blue-tinted night sky, towards the source of the whine. And for the children, time stopped.

Burning, they fell out of the sky, equal and opposite super humans.

Looking at them…. It almost hurt. Seeing something so impossible, it hurt like a parent's slap. What the children was seeing, it was wrong on every conceivable level, but it was the truth, it was how the world was. People shouldn't be able to do things like this, shouldn't look like this, but here they were. The impossible was screaming from the sky towards them, towards the blue of the clinic. Confronted by the impossibility of post-human warriors doing battle in the sky above them, the children responded. Not with words, though Joey moaned something incoherent, something that even years later, none of them would have the first clue how to decipher. Not with action, because they were all rooted to the spot. But the children responded, how could they not?

Fabian's heart started jack hammering in his chest, and his body went slick with sweat, and in a second his clean t-shirt was soaked through. Steve wanted to scream, and to cry, and to curl up asleep forever and to laugh endlessly for joy, all at once. Joey clenched his hands so hard, his short finger nails dug deep enough into his palm to draw slivers of blood and wet himself a little. And Cassie felt something that years later would realize was probably an orgasm.

Burning, they fell out of the sky, equal and opposite super humans.

She was an angel sculpted from silvery circuits and blue lightning, the same color as the forcefield beneath. Bolts of lightning, powerful *enough to blow through a bridge stanchion, burst from her outstretched hands, but it wasn't enough. She was screaming, desperate, and she knew it was all going wrong, but she still wouldn't give up. They scramble and brawl in mid air, their powers forgotten as they attempt to beat each other to death, or failing that, make sure their opposite number is on the bottom when they impact. Energy blasts and rail gun bursts fly everywhere, neither able to aim, and both firing blind and wild.*

He was a monster of black basalt and purple steel, a cybernetic goliath with a face like a screaming iron skull. He was a nightmare gargoyle, a demon from a terrorist's maddest fantasy, and he pounded the blue-lit soldier with a relish that made the glowing crimson "Pro-Life" tattoos on his stone-encased forearms an obvious lie. The monster's basalt skin was carved into a gallery of silent, still newborns and shredded cherubs. Her every shot scrapes away more fetal momento mori, but still the black and purple goliath keeps fighting, and-

-and beneath the forcedome, the soldier who made Cassie's day is no longer bored. Her only thought is to get the kids clear somehow, because that son of a bitch is coming down right on top of them. Her partner is keying in the panic order, and the soldier is fumbling through the smartlight command matrix on her gauntlet to open a door way in the forcefield and-

-And Steve is grabbing Cassie by the arm, hard enough she'll have bruises tomorrow, and is dragging her away. And Fabian is just starting to sprint, and Joey is running already, and-

-and the Ghost of Babies Past roars his triumph and kicks in his vernal thrusters, and accelerates towards the glistening blue target below, knowing he'll crush this bitch between him and the 'dome, and-

-and XLR-8 knows she's going to die, and she says an incoherent prayer and prepares to show this Christian bastard how well a Wiccan dies and she keeps firing, hoping against hope that she'll find a weak point in Ghost's armor and-

-and the soldier finally gets the forcedome open, just a crack, and is running towards the children. And she snatches up Steve and Cassie in her arms and keys in her suit's sprinter endo-skeleton so she can move faster, and maybe get them clear in time and-

-And Steve is barely aware what's happening, and everything is happening so fast, but its also going so slow, that in all the years to come, he'll see what happens next in his dreams like still photographs. And-

-and Joey is turning back, looking for his brother, and-

-and
-and
-and impact.

There is a noise like the world ending, like a window the size of a continent shattering. It's a musical sound, and than the forcefield shatters, exploding like glass. For a fraction of a second, the ruined forcefield continues to pretend its glass, but than its residual energy is gone, and so are the forcefield shards. And so is the blue light.

And it's very dark as the Ghost slams his prey into the clinic, for just a second, before a flash of white erupts from the ruined body of his adversary. Lightning, like nothing seen since life emerged on this planet, splits the sky, and burns white. A column of white fire rips through the Ghost's chest, and he dies at the moment of his triumph, the look of viscous joy on his cybernetic face giving way to dim confusion.

And than the shockwave hits, as XLR-8's power cells redline and cook off. The Tankhill clinic bursts from within, unable to contain the vast, impossible detonation. Paper and plastic *vaporize. A foam and faux-leather examination bed hisses away as foul smelling steam while computers catch fire from the molecules up. Brick and structural steel disintegrate, becoming shrapnel. The smoking soldier dies instantly, killed before her body can feel the pain of its demise.*

And the soldier carrying Steve and Cassie dies almost as quickly, the shrapnel ripping her through her armor. Her blood is hot on Cassie's shocked, unseeing face. And a piece of shrapnel, what forensics later determined was a piece of a door handle, clipped Steve high on the temple, and he went limp even as he was falling to the ground.

And Joey turned back, to see what had happened to his brother, and a storm of metal and brick and plastic shards ripped through his body, and he fell, wondering why his legs suddenly stopped working….

And the ambulances were there in two minutes, and their parents and the actors from the play, and the other people in the park were there in one minute, and the reporters there were almost as quickly.

And Fabian and Cassie were just standing there, holding each other, their faces white, and Joey was moaning and half reaching for his brother, and holding his guts in with one hand, an expression no 10 year old should ever have to wear on his face. And Cassie was shaking, and Fabian was crying silently, staring into the burning rubble

---

The scar on Steve's temple never fully closed, and never goes away completely, not even when he uses his metahuman gifts to change his form. Two decades later, long after he became a man, long after he joined the Choicers for real, he went back to that day in Tankhill Park. He pieced things together, the whys, the whos, the hows, the motives everyone claimed to have and the motives they really had. Steve found out why the third (and most infamous) Ghost of Babies Past picked that Midsummer Night to break the Truce, and why he picked that particular clinic, and why three good women had to die to stop him.

Steve, years later, broke the neck of the sixth man to assume the name and role of the Ghost with his bare hands. When he did it, his brother, Joe, was at his side. His twin brother, now a decade his junior, who lost nearly ten years of his life in a regenerative coma after that Midsummer Night. Joey's only memories of that night are ghosts and enigmas, flashes of discordant images, nothing coherent. Nothing real. Just dreams and blurred mind pictures.

The others remembered, though. Every second of the assault, which seemed like it lasted a year and a day, but in reality, which was over in less than six seconds. Even after they choose their powers, after they became more than human, they never forgot seeing the Tankhill Clinic destroyed in front of their eyes. Even Cassie, the angriest, the most powerful of them all, a living nuclear warhead in the form of a girl, even Cassie never forgot that moment of terror as the two metahumans dropped from the sky. There's a reason Cassie is very, very careful when she has to fight in a city, and why she almost never unleashes her full power. By the dawn of the 22nd Century, "Never Again" was no longer just a phrase reserved for Jews.

At the gamemasters option, anytime an Otherverse America character encounters a metahuman, Psionic or Lifechained creature with a Challenge Rating more than 5 higher than their own CR or total character level, they may fall victim to ‘power awe’. Power awe applies any time the Powered charges, attacks, makes a threat display or activates an obvious superhuman power. The gamemaster may decide that other particularly impressive creatures, such as Dragons and some powerful Outsiders, provoke an emotional response identical to Power Awe.

The character must succeed at a WILL Save (DC 8 + the metahuman’s reputation bonus + the metahuman’s CHA modifier) or be *stunned* for 1d3 rounds. If the save is successfully, the character is merely *shaken* for the duration.

Intangibles: Power Awe

Seeing a metahuman warrior in all their glory is a sight to behold, a defining moment in a life. Not every Powered can inspire true awe- most of the soldiers on both sides of the Abortion War are just that, soldiers. However, a rare few metahumans are so imposing and impressive, or so legendary that ordinary humans (and even rookie Powereds) can’t help but stop and stare.

The children’s reaction to the sudden, shocking appearance of the Ghost of Babies Past and XLR-8 in the opening fiction is a perfect example of power awe. Your conscious mind freezes and shuts down, stunned by seeing something so inhuman, so beautiful, or so disturbing, and your flight/fight response and instincts kick into overdrive.

Once the character successfully saves against Power Awe, they can’t be affected by that metahuman’s awe-inspiring presence again for 24 hours.

Object Philosophy

Object Philosophy is a term coined by parapsychologists and meta-physicians during the mid 2030s. Object Philosophies are meditations derived from the study of post-human psychology, which give adherents incredible, almost magical gifts. These unique talents differentiate Otherverse America from the wide assortment of high-tech D20 Modern and D20 Future campaigns out there almost as much as the setting's central conflict does.

Object Philosophies were initially derived from the study of metahuman neurology, and can be thought of as an attempt to teach genetically ordinary human beings to think like a Powered, and thus, duplicate or exceed Powered abilities. Metahuman volunteers activated and used their superhuman talents under controlled, laboratory conditions, while attending paraphysicians monitored brain activity. Using psycho-feedback techniques and neural-enhancement drugs, ordinary men and women attempted to duplicate Powered brain activity. Few succeeded, but those that did were eventually able to successfully duplicate their assigned powers.

Once a practitioner successfully uses an Object Philosophy under lab conditions, they repeat the feat, over and over, until they can use the Philosophy at will, without relying on support machines and enhancement drugs. Object Philosophies are popular forms of human enhancement for many reasons, from the purely tactical to the theological.

As a matter of tactical doctrine, Object Philosophies are a field commander's dream come true. Though not every soldier is strong-willed enough to master the concept, training those elite soldiers who are is relatively cheap and easy. The techniques behind Object Philosophies have been known and documented since 2034. Compared to other enhancement programs, like full cyber-conversion or genetic therapy, Object Philosophy training is only a little more expensive than standard military instruction. A dozen or more soldiers can under go Philosophy training for the less than the cost of one new full conversion cyborg. Even better, unlike cyborgs or Powereds, Philosophy practitioners remain fully human, undetectable until they manifest their near-psionic talents. Object Philosophies are perfect 'stealth' mind-weapons.

Object Philosophies can alter the fundamental fabric of reality, manipulating the practitioner's environment on a sub-quantum level, apparently without an energy source. Some Philosophies can resurrect the dead; others can alter weather patterns over an area a dozen miles in diameter. Powereds require cellular structures that resemble microscopic fusion reactors to power their post-human gifts; cyborgs can be tracked by the energy their onboard reactors leak. Where does this energy come from?

Add to this the fact that an Object Philosophy reflects the beliefs and personality of the practitioner using it, and it becomes easy to see why many users define Philosophies in religious terms. Lifer adherents refer to their Philosophies with terms like 'Pentecostal Fire' and 'gifts of the holy spirit'. Choicer thought-soldiers speak of spells and magic, or of the blessings of the Goddess. Using Object Philosophies, rather than another weapon, a believer not only accomplishes their goals, but provides tangible proof of the power of their faith.

Viewed in purely secular terms, Object Philosophies represent some of the 22nd Centuries most impressive weapons. Thse self-hypnotic programs and mental trigger exercises help unlock a user's latent psi-talents, enabling them to unlock abilities that may be the birthright of all humanity. The Lifer Nation, the Choicer Covenant of the Goddess Universal, and even APEX and some private organizations all make extensive use of Object Philosophies.

Gaining Object Philosophies

Characters in the Otherverse America campaign may select from a wide variety of Object Philosophies unique to their faction. Like Lifechain feats, Genefeats and Psionic and Precursor Feats (described in the Psi-Watch Campaign Setting), Object Philosophies are a path to power, and a way for players to customize and empower their characters.

Not every character learns Object Philosophies; many simply lack the will power and intellect necessary to manifest these potent thought talents. Before selecting any Object Philosophy feat, the character must first select the Neural Conditioning feat, described below. Individual Philosophies usually have additional prerequistes. Compared to other feats, Object Philosophies tend to have fairly heavy prerequistes, which helps balance their relative power and utility, and the fact that few effective countermeasures (or detection methods) exist to counter them.

Neural Conditioning (General – Object Philosophy)

You have undergone extensive training to enable you to understand and manifest Object Philosophies. Though an act of concentration, you can duplicate the unusual neural activity of a typical metahuman, and in doing so, you can manifest metahuman gifts yourself.

Prerequistes: Iron Will, Concentration 2 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank

Benefit: Your mental training has begun awakening your post-human abilities, and unlocking portions of the brain that most humans never access. You are incredibly strong willed. When using action points to enhance any the results of any Concentration check or WILL Saving Throw, you may expend as many action points as you feel necessary, receiving a separate, cumulative bonus from each one. You may declare the expenditure of additional action points after the action die (or action dice) is rolled.

Normal: You may only expend a single action point per round, and only receive a single action point's bonus on a specific check.

Special: Once this feat is selected, you may select Object Philosophies any time you are eligible to select a new feat. You must select this feat prior to acquiring Object Philosophies.

Special: By selecting this feat, you also gain the Psionic subtype, and may freely select from Psionic and Psionic Precursor Feats, described in the Psi-Watch campaign setting.

Military Naming Conventions

Having distinct naming conventions for Lifer and Choicer vehicles and weapons help distinguish the two armies.

With a very few exceptions, Choicer weapon systems are named for modern pagan authors and theologians, while gear favored by hardline Bastians is named for accused witches who died during the Colonial Era or Inquisition. Choicer civilian vehicles are given names that emphasize freedom, nature and hope- cheerful, marketable and optimistic terms are the norm, while military vehicles are often named for mythological figures.

By contrast, Lifer weapons systems are named for modern anti-abortion terrorists and demagogues. Lifer vehicles, including military vehicles have Bible inspired names, while Lifer civilian tech trademarks emphasize duty, courage, and militarism.

Finally, APEX and American equipment (described in a forthcoming sourcebook) takes its name from American military and political leaders. American civilian vehicles are intentionally given bland, corporate, meaninglessly inoffensive names.

Religion and the Otherverse

Religion tore the country apart, and drew the two pseudo-nations together. Given the religious conflict at the heart of the setting, its not unusual that many characters and important NPCs will be religious leaders. The following religious leadership feats are just part of the full social-interaction rules found in the Psi-Watch Campaign Setting. They are reprinted here due to their commonality, and due to the fact that many Choicer and Lifer Advanced Classes require one or more of these feats as an entry requirement.

One common trait of both nations is that while the Abortion War has radicalized believers on both sides, it has also democraticized religious leadership. Both sides believe strongly that all men and women have an innate connection to God (or to the Goddess), and all people have a chance to hear a call to clerical service. Citizens in both nations are devout and highly educated; philosophical debates and religious discussion are common pastimes among family and friends. The line between lay believer and religious leader is blurred.

The Lifers, thanks to a strong Protestant heritage, have taken this idea even farther than the somewhat caste-based Choicer nation. While the Lifer nation is home to an assortment of seminaries and Bible Colleges, many Lifer theologians are self taught, or learn at the feat of other charismatic pastors.

Aligned Zealot (General)

Your deep and abiding faith gives you strength in times of strife and gives you courage when facing down the enemies of your god or goddess.

Prerequistes: Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Iron Will, a specific declared allegiance.

Benefit: You may select one specific alignment, citizens of a specific nation, or all believers in a particular deity. You receive a +1 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls when confronting a member of the despised affiliation.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you do so, it applies to a new alignment, nation or faith. Your enemies cannot be in obvious opposition, and you may not normally select members of your own allegiance as the targets of this feat.

Anointed Cleric (General)

You are a member of an organized, respected faith, and have a reputation as a wise consoler and well intentioned servant of the divine.

Prerequistes: CHA 13, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks

Benefit: You hold a rank in a religious hierarchy, can perform important ceremonies like baptisms, marriages, and funerals, are called upon by your faithful to settle disputes and give spiritual guidance. When interacting with members of your faith, you receive a +4 holy bonus on Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks.

Special: From time to time, at the GM's discretion, you may be called upon to perform counseling, lead important ceremonies, and serve other mundane religious functions. If these duties conflict with your adventuring activities, and if you successfully balance both responsibilities, you may be rewarded with a temporary action point, which must be spent before the end of the current adventure. If you act in a manner contrary to your faith, or gain an incompatible allegiance, you may be stripped of this feat.

Evangelist (General)

You are widely regarded as a great religious speaker, and a firm apologist for your faith, and regularly win new converts.

Prerequistes: Anointed Cleric

Benefit: You receive a +2 holy bonus on Diplomacy, Intimidate and Profession (clergy) checks. When attempting to convert a nonbeliever with a Diplomacy or Intimidate check, you may call upon your great inner faith by spending an action point to receive a +2d6 bonus on the check.

High Cleric (General)

You are a widely respected religious leader, able to shape your faith's political policies, initiate new members and speak authoritively on behalf of the church. You have relatively high rank within your faith, equivalent to a High Priest or Priestesses, Elder or Bishop or Cardinal.

Prerequistes: Anointed Cleric, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 8 ranks

Benefit: The bonuses provided by the Anointed Cleric feat increase to +6. In addition, even when dealing with those who are not a member of your faith, you are still given some respect as an experienced religious authority. You receive a +1 bonus on all skills enhanced by the Anointed Cleric feat, even when interacting with non-believers.

By engaging in a lengthy public ritual, you can grant any believer who meets the prerequistes the Anointed Cleric feat.

Meaningful Ink (General)

There's a flag sewn into your skin. Your scars and tattoos tell the world who you are, what you stand for, and you draw strength and courage from them.

Benefit: You've been extensively tattooed, scarred or branded, marked with designs that have deep personal meaning for you. Your markings grant two of the following the following morale bonuses:

- +2 morale bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks against anyone sharing your allegiance.
- +2 morale bonus to any Perform checks made against anyone sharing your allegiance.
- +2 bonus on melee attack damage rolls agaisnt anyone directly opposed to your allegiance
- +1 morale bonus to Defense

Your tattoos are considered a holy symbol and divine focus for casting divine spells and using divinely inspired class features.

Drawback: Anyone seeing your highly detailed, wide reaching tattoos may attempt a DC 12 Knowledge check (the type determined by the GM based on the type of affiliation you claim). Success means the viewer easily knows the allegiance your tattoos represent. If you select this feat multiple times, each time the check DC decreases by 2 points.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you do so, the feat and its benefits apply to a particular allegiance. Your allegiances cannot be in obvious conflict. You may choose a different benefit each time, or select the same benefit multiple times, in which case the effects stack.

Military Chaplin (General)

Military chaplains- whatever their faith and nation of origin- are expected to be able to keep up with the soldiers they minister to in the field. Chaplains can turn to their faith for comfort in trying times and are a voice of quiet authority in the unit.

Prerequisite: Anointed Cleric, Endurance

Benefit: Each day, you receive a pool of bonus points equal to your ranks in Knowledge: theology & philosophy and your WIS modifier (minimum two points). You may spend any number of these bonus points as a morale bonus, used to improve your skill checks throughout the day. You may choose enhance any Diplomacy check made against military personnel, Survival or Treat Injury checks, as well as any FORT Save affected by the

Endurance feat.

You may spend any number of points. You decide to add the bonus after rolling the check, but before the results of the check is announced. Doing so is considered part of the action to be enhanced.

Intangibles: Key Attributes

One of the unspoken themes of the Otherverse is a duality that should be familiar to any fan of early 90s arcade fighters: fast and weak versus plodding but powerful…. In a nut shell, Chun Li vs Zangief. The Lifer Nation fields some of the largest and most impressive war machines on the planet, while the Choicer forces uses faster, more lightly armored systems.

Even the way you assign your character's ability scores can reinforce the feeling of duality and segregation inherent to the setting. Lifer characters prioritize Strength and Charisma, and many of their feats and advanced classes build on these two attributes. By contrast, Choicer characters prioritize Dexterity and Intelligence. As a stereotype, Lifers are physically powerful, and lead by emotion and passionate oratory. Choicers are lithe and agile, and prefer intellect to raw emotion and the cult of personality.

It's not required you build your characters like this, and throughout the Otherverse, you'll find as many characters that break these rules as uphold them. This is just another thing to think about, as you build your character and set them loose on the world.

CLINIC
CORT

Chapter Two: A Soldier's Book of Shadows

January 22nd, 2107.
The Pacific Beanstalk, 17 nautical miles from San Francisco Harbor

It's so strange working this mission with Major Rice.

He's older than most of us, by nearly six decades, for one, and he was actually alive before the War began! He's not a pagan either, though I think he's only monotheist-Christian, and not Lifer at all. Blessed be for that! He's been blind since birth, and even nanonics can't do anything to help him because he doesn't really have an optic nerve like I do. So when he sees, like he's doing now, by linking into real time satellite telemetry, or by psi-linking to that monster dog of his. He's cyber-linked to a rail gun, and Major Rice is our team's sniper spotter.

(I don't know where the dog is now. He told it to go hide, and it did, and even with all my sensors active-on, I can't find any trace of that thing.)

They say he lost his eyes before he was born- some kind of Lifer nano-toxin targeting his mother. Supposedly she was one of us- she was even a priestess-midwife, what we call a cearea in my coven- but he doesn't talk about that. He doesn't talk much about anything, really, at least not to us. I've caught him talking to the dog, though, and acting like it understood him, and it probably does (I hate that dog). He doesn't pray or cast the runes or anything before a mission either, like the rest of us do, though he says he doesn't mind if we place a white working over him. We do that at least.

This is my first combat op, but he's been with APEX since the beginning of the War. The Americans are working with us because if the Lifers manage to damage our orbital 'beanstalk', it'll hurt ordinary America almost as much as it hurts our Covenant. So they've loaned us Major Rice as a sniper/observer, and a few Shell troops- some of the new model "Rain Dance" suits. There's six of them, and twelve of us all together- thirteen including myself- a full coven of war. Our little coven's women have all 'bled in' using our nano-prescriptions, and have that old, bloody power ready within us.

Some of us are Powereds. Banila is a telepath- she's handling comms; Spiral Father is our flier and energy caster and Ferdinand is a full conversion cyborg, and he's incredible. His hull looks like solid gold studded with silver, and he has so more fire power than any of us. He's our gunner, and he's been a part of the coven of war since two Ostara ago. Me, I'm the newbie, and I've only been a part of the little coven a few weeks. I've got alien DNA inside me, and even though I look pretty human, I can control shadows, leap between them, do all sorts of impressive stuff with darkness. (And even with all that, I still can't find that dog.)

Right now, I've wrapped a dark field around all of us, aboard the deck of our PT boat. Major Rice is up on top of the wheelhouse, under a ghile blanket, where he's got the best possible line of sight to the Beanstalk. We're running in hardcore stealth mode, and our boat looks pretty much like any of the other pleasure yachts you'd see out in the Bay around Aradia during our big holidays. There's a lot of other crafts like ours around, because of the Roe Day holiday, of course. The sea is crowded, and there's American Navy ships keeping an eye on things, and our Navy too.

We're here because our diviner-precogs had a flash that Lifewing and his cell would try to hit the beanstalk tonight. We confirmed things with our Bastian intel operatives, and they're pretty much never wrong. The Lifers really, really hate our Beanstalk, and I guess this Lifewing guy thinks it would be better to hurt the Beanstalk than attack one of our clinics or covenheaths tonight or anything. I guess it would hurt us a lot *more; all our space traffic and xeno-imports go through the Beanstalk.*

I wonder if they're actually going to hit us or not, because maybe Lifewing heard about our op. The Lifers have as good of intel as we do, even though they don't really use too many precogs. They're just a lot sneakier. They-

Mission alert screaming right into my forebrain, from Ferdinand's distant-early suite! Something's coming down on a fast ballistic descent from northwesterly! He mind-flashes me the tactical data, and there's a lot of incoming mail- six or seven of 'em at least!

And just like we planned, I'm pulling in my darkfield close so everybody can see out easily.

Hot wind on the back of my neck as Ferdinand lifts off, and than the biggest boom in the world, as Major Rice swivels his rail gun just a few millimeters up and over, and fires. By the time I even hear the rail gun kick, the flachette's already half way to the target, and one of the incoming just disappears off my heads-up. Gone fast, but the others are still coming in.

Spiral Father takes to the air, with a quiet humming noise that always makes me think about Christian-style church bells ringing and the first time I had sex. He says its a psionic side effect of his powers, these weird minor hallucinations, but we're all pretty much used to it by now. He fires, a line of blue light that hurts my eyes and sets my teeth on edge. The rest of us hold fire, because they're still miles off, way outside our guns' ranges.

We get visuals a second later and it all starts happening so fast. So fast. They're big- Lifer shells always are. They like huge things, like they're flying tanks. Purple and black, and so hard to see up against the night like this. Its only when they fly against the golden floodlights lighting up the Beanstalk that they're easy to see. All of the Lifer shells have their video screens turned off, which is good, because I hate seeing those dead baby video-loops they're always playing.

They're so loud. Huge engines, roaring like a suborbital taking off. Are our Shells that noisy? They can't be. They-

One of them is dropping right towards us. The cannons on the gauntlets are just spraying fire, and I can feel the shots through my dark shield, and somebody isn't under my field and gets hit, and I feel somebody die through Banila's psi-link and its such a horrible falling sensation and-

The biggest Shell is right on top of us, and I realize its Lifewing himself, and his passage is shaking the boat to pieces, and he's still shooting and that fucking monster dog is leaping out of the wheel house and biting down right into Lifewing's shoulder armor, and I hate that dog, and

-and I'm leaping myself, focusing my dark field under me like a rocket's wash and than I'm on Lifewing's back, I'm shaping my dark field into monomolecular talons, and something explodes behind me and-

- *Real time Mission-Mind auto journal (Classification: Secret), Martial Sojourner Celeste Eriu, Warname: Shadedown.*

Pro-Choice Birthright

"Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill/
And it harm none, do what you will."
-The Wiccan Rede (traditional)

Choicer culture is stratified, and differences between the various Choicer factions are rapidly developing into separate and sometimes opposing castes. The following feats, along with some of the new starting occupations described here help define a character's role within the Covenant. These feats represent a Choicer's birthright within the nation.

Chosen and Beloved (General)

You are the offspring of prosperous and loving Choicer parents. Your birth was celebrated among the community, and you were formally introduced into Choicer society at an early age.

This feat is especially common among children conceived on Beltane night.

Prerequisite: INT 13+, Character level first only

Benefit: Your close connection to your family benefits you socially. You receive a +1 bonus on your Wealth Score, as well as a +1 increase to your Reputation score, due to your early introductions throughout the Choicer intelligentsia.

A number of times per day equal to your INT modifier (minimum once daily) you can draw upon some half forgotten lesson from your childhood. If you fail any Knowledge: check, you may reroll the check. You must accept the result of the second roll, even if it is worse than the first roll.

Universal Witch (General)

You are a respected member of the continent spanning Covenant of the Goddess Universal. The Covenant a technologically adept pagan society, blending 22nd century nanoics and cutting edge gene-tech with Wiccan and pagan traditions. Believers of both genders are referred to as 'witches' within this society.

Prerequisite: Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank

Benefit: You are familiar with the Neo-Wiccan philosophy underlying the Covenant Universal, and have an insiders understanding of the often contentious politics and advanced technology that defines the nation.

You receive a +2 bonus on Knowledge: theology & philosophy checks, as well as Knowledge: technology checks and Knowledge: civics checks made concerning the organization's internal politics. Depending on your interests, you may choose to receive a +2 bonus on any one of the following checks: Craft: visual arts, Computer Use, Treat Injury or Repair.

In addition to the new advanced classes described in this sourcebook, the heroes and villains of Otherverse America make full use of the advanced classes described in the *D20 Modern core rulebook* and *D20 Future* supplement. Of course, with America splitting across religious and political lines, even the most mundane careers have been politicized, and a Choicer Investigator or Helix Warrior probably looks a lot different than their Lifer counterparts.

Many of the advanced classes described in Skortched Urf Studio's *Department Seven Advanced Class Update* series can also be integrated into the Otherverse America setting. Many of the high tech or psionic advanced classes can be added to the campaign with virtually no modification. It's easy to imagine a Lifer Shotgun Surgeon or a Choicer Mind Reaper.

Advanced classes that incorporate modern magic elements need a little more work before they're ready for use with the Otherverse. In most cases, the gamemaster can explain away magical Supernatural or Spell-like abilities as the result of cutting edge smartlight weapons, thought-virals or strange new Object Philosophies. Many of these magic using classes have slightly modified entry requirements, which add mastery of the Neural Conditioning Feat to the class prerequistes. Such modifications are described below.

Most classes not mentioned here can be used without modification (or with only minor, cosmetic alterations) in the Otherverse America setting.

Choicer Advanced Classes

Choicer Soldiers: Soldiers, Gunslingers, Martial Artists, Field Officers and Helix Warriors, Combat Types and Frontliners (from Psi-Watch)

The Choicer military is the best in the world, and like its Lifer counterpart, makes use of highly trained, well equipped professional soldiers of all types. Most of these military experts function identically to their counterparts in other settings. Choicer soldiers of all breeds can select Choicer martial arts feats in place of a class-based bonus feat.

Most regular Choicer infantry are multiclass Soldiers/Helix Warriors. During training, many Choicer soldiers are enhanced with minor genetic modifications and specially designed drug regimens. The best and most dedicated Choicer soldiers are selected for more intensive genetic restructuring, becoming Combat Types, Frontliners or other super-soldiers. Early in their career many Choicer metahumans take levels in Powered Hero Basic Class, or volunteer to defend a Choicer clinic or covenheath as a Clinic Defender (Choicer and Blood, LPJ Designs, 2007).

Choicer Medics: Abortion Provider, Field Medic, Field Scientists

The Choicer Covenant is world renowned for its excellent medical care and cybernetics industry. Choicer geneticists and cyber-medics are among the best in the country, and provide care for millions of Americans, including many wealthy Lifers.

In addition to their high tech skills, Choicer physicians incorporate shamanistic and pagan magical elements into their practice. Old superstitions, handed down from mother to daughter, are blended with (and empowered by) cutting edge Object Philosophies.

To reflect the importance that pagan tradition and theology plays in Choicer medicine, any of the Choicer medics listed above may add Anointed Cleric, Evangelist and High Cleric as well as Cyber-

Surgery (*from D20 Future*) to their list of class-based bonus feats.

Any Choicer aligned Smart or Dedicated Hero who serves as a medic or EMT, as well as members of the Field Medic or Abortion Provider advanced class(from Choice and Blood, LPJ Designs, 2007) may add these feats as new bonus feat options. At the gamemaster's option, any other medical professional from within the Covenant may select from these new advanced feats.

The Flow Witch Advanced Class (from Black Tokyo)

The Flow Witch is a modern magic advanced class from the sexually explicit Black Tokyo campaign setting. The Flow Witch uses her own magically active menstrual blood and bodily fluids to transform, mutate and empower her supplicants and to curse her enemies. The class' strong feminist slant and bizarre, menstruation focused abilities give the Flow Witch a natural place within the Covenant.

Choicer Flow Witches are referred to as Neo-Witch Creatrix as often as they are referred to as Flow Witches. Their abilities are the result of bloody Object Philosophies and innovative nanotech infections, but are no less potent than those of their magical counterparts in another reality.

Choicer Flow Witches/Creatrix are most commonly found among the Sisterhood of Bast; these strange gyno-shamen are at the intellectual heart of the Bastian movement. Using their post-human gifts, these blood-soaked witches are responsible for pushing the Bastian culture as far from the American baseline as it has progressed. Without the guidance and wisdom of the Neo-Witch Creattrix, the emergent Bastian culture probably wouldn't have the cohesion, sense of purpose and uniqueness it does today.

In addition to their leadership role, Neo-Witch Creatrix are found at the frontlines of battle, using their mutation abilities to spawn mutant servitors from ordinary animals. They are also bio-warfare experts, and are able to use their abilities and medical knowledge to create (or neutralize) the most deadly bio-agents imaginable.

The Choicer Flow Witch/Creatrix has slightly different entry requirements than the Flow Witches of Black Tokyo, and gains a useful new ability.

To qualify to become a Choicer Flow Witch (Neo-Witch Creatix), a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base FORT Save: +3
Skills: Craft: chemical, 4 ranks, Knowledge: earth & life sciences 6 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Treat Injury 8 ranks
Feats: Moonwise, Neural Conditioning, Uterine

Nano-Armor, Medical Expert or Surgery
Gender: A potential Neo-Witch Creatrix must be female, for reasons both anatomical and philosophical.
Special: A potential Neo-Witch Creatrix must be an active member of any Bastian cult or coven within the Covenant, and must have declared at least one of her allegiances to either the Choicer nation as a whole, to the Bastians, or to any other pagan or pro-choice group or cause.

Anointed Cleric (EX): In addition to the abilities all Flow Witches gain at first level, a Choicer Flow Witch gains Anointed Cleric as a bonus feat, even if she does not meet the prerequistes.

Squad Leader (EX): In addition to the abilities all Flow Witches gain at fourth level, a Choicer Flow Witch gains Squad Leader (described in Psi-Watch) as a bonus feat even if she does not meet the perquisites. A Choicer Flow Witch's effective squad leader level is increased by +2 when recruiting followers or cohorts from among the Bastian faithful.

The Final Sword Advanced Class (from Psi-Watch)

The Final Sword can easily be integrated into the Choicer military, representing the pinnacle of Choicer dueling expertise. Choicer Final Swords are much less arrogant than their Culture counterparts, but lack none of the fighting skill.

To qualify to become a Choicer Final Sword, a character must fulfill the following criteria

Base Attack Bonus: +5
Skills: Jump 4 ranks, Knowledge: tactics 4 ranks, Knowledge: art 1 rank, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank
Feats: Combat Expertise, Covenant Duelist, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (katana)
Special: A prospective Choicer Final Sword must be accepted as a member of a Covenant dueling society, and must accept a dueling scar and ritual tattoos indicating their membership within this group. At least one of the Final Sword's declared allegiances must towards the Covenant or a Choicer cause or group.

Bonus Feats: A Choicer Final Sword adds all Choicer martial arts feats to their list of class-based bonus feats.

Class Features: Replace all references to the Culture or the Final Sword's Order with references to Choicer culture as a whole.

Covenant Psionics

The Covenant is one of the world leaders in parapsychology. Psionics, especially precognition, is a major part of both Covenant culture and as Choicer military doctrine. Each year at Midsummer, Covenant media starts obsessing over celebrity dreams, oracles and omens, while the Choicer military uses highly trained psions to catch a glimpse of future conflicts. Oracle readings and dream interpretation are a popular hobby at every level of Choicer society.

A surprisingly large segment of the Choicer population has at least a minor psi-talent. In addition to 'low-level' feats such as Educated, which help Choicer civilians in their mundane careers, many Choicer ordinary characters select one or two psionic precursor feats (described in the Psi-Watch campaign setting).

Psionic Precursors with few prerequistes are most often chosen: many of the smartest, strongest willed Choicer ordinaries have mastered useful psi-talents like Akashatic Search, Circuit Neurology, Instinctive Psion, and Psychometric Touch. Some especially gifted Choicer kids practice Open Handed TK as a hobby.

Not every Choicer ordinary can meet the (relatively) high attribute requirements for psi-talent, but those that can aren't usually seen as full-fledged "Powereds". Instead, they're neighborhood celebrities and shamen, at best. People may come to them for advice (including the police in the case of skilled and trustworthy object readers), but they are still considered fairly ‘ordinary’ humans. Still, the prevalence and wide acceptance of psionics in Choicer culture gives their military a deep pool of psi-capable recruits to draw upon.

Choicer Combat Styles

The Neo-Pagan heritage of the Choicer Covenant is apparent in the unique martial arts styles the nation has invented. The ritual use of the *atheme* (a blunt, ceremonial dagger used in Wiccan rites) has evolved into the Covenant Duelist style, one of the deadliest weapon-based combat forms on the planet. The Covenant Duelist style is a graceful, fluid form, which blends dance-like evasion with brutal, efficient strikes at an opponent’s vitals. Choicer martial arts emphasize offense and defense equally, and are designed to allow a single practitioner to effectively counter multiple opponents, or a single superhuman adversary. White Hand, Black Moon is the major unarmed combat style and exemplifies this philosophy perfectly.

The Choicers see themselves as a people under siege, and have a deep well of justified paranoia. Covenant citizens place a great emphasis on being able to defend themselves, and even Covenant civilians have decent situational awareness. Martial arts and swordsmanship are popular pastimes; Covenant dueling clubs are popular social outlets. Membership in a prestigious dueling club helps Covenant citizens with everything from casual dating to career advancement, and a dueling *schiess* (scar) is a mark of style and beauty.

Any Choicer-aligned Martial Artist or Helix Warrior adds the following melee combat feats to his or her list of class-based bonus feat choices.

Ancient, Trusted Weapons (General)

You have extensively trained with a variety of weapons, chosen for their symbolism, all of which have an important place in pagan myth and history. You are a warrior-witch, capable of defending your faith and freedom with an assortment of deadly blades.

Prerequisite: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Base Attack Bonus +1, Knowledge: history 1 rank, theology & philosophy 1 rank

Benefit: You are considered familiar with an proficient with all the following types of weapons, including a handful of otherwise exotic weapons:

All hand axes, flails, longswords, kama, kukri, scythe, scimitar, all staffs/bos, spear

You may substitute any of these weapons for a traditional atheme when using any martial arts style which utilizes your atheme as a weapon, including the Instinctive Parry feat tree.

Chivalrous Defender (General)

> *"Well, you're certainly well equipped, Ballistic, but you're working the wrong side in this war. The girl has a right to make up her own mind, and we're defending that right."*
> *-Stryker, Mark Silvestri's* *Cyberforce*

You were raised and specifically trained to defend women and the feminine ideal of choice. You have been trained as a modern day Grail Knight, your life dedicated towards protecting the women and girls of the Covenant.

Prerequisite: Alertness, Choicer or any neo-pagan allegiance

Benefit: You provide any female ally you are adjacent to with a +1 deflection bonus to their Defense score. When within 5 ft of any female ally, both you and your charge roll Initiative normally, but both characters use the higher Initiative count and can act simultaneously if they choose.

Special: Only males can select this feat.

Covenant Duelist (General)

You carry an atheme (ceremonial knife) as a symbol of your faith, but more than that, you realize that there are times when faith is useless without a blade in your hands. You have mastered a defense-focused knife fighting style designed to keep you alive in a divided America often hostile to pagans.

Prerequisite: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: You have learned a defensive fighting style devised by Covenant priestesses. When fighting with your atheme or any other knife or short sword, you may choose to sacrifice up to –5 points of your base attack bonus.

Each point of BAB sacrificed increases your Defense score by +2 points. This bonus may not exceed twice your BAB. The bonus to Defense is a Dodge bonus. The changes to attack roll and Defense last until your next action.

You receive a +1 insight bonus on disarm attempts made with any knife or short sword.

Normal: You trade points between Defense and Base Attack Bonus on a 1 for 1 basis.

Feminist Gun (General)

You've studied enough history to realize that the only defense against oppression is the gun in your hands. You've learned to shoot from Choicer range-masters who transform gunplay into a sacrament.

Prerequisite: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Aligned Zealot, Iron Will

Benefit: You receive a +1 morale bonus on ranged attack rolls made against humanoid males. The bonus increases to a +2 morale bonus against any male with a Lifer or similar allegiance, and becomes a +3 morale bonus against any Lifer male you know to have ever killed or seriously harmed any woman sharing your allegiance.

Special: Only females or Choicer aligned males with the Chivalrous Defender feat may select this feat.

Instant Retaliation (General)

You are a master duelist, and can turn a failed attack into a lethal opening, giving you a split second chance to drive your blade into your opponent's heart.

Prerequistes: Covenant Duelist, Instinctive Parry, BAB +5

Benefit: Any time you successfully parry an incoming melee attack, you can instantly retaliate against your attacker. You may either attempt to sunder the weapon you parried or take an attack of opportunity against your attacker.

You may spend an action point while retaliating to seize an opportunity and inflict additional damage. If you choose to spend an action point and your attack if successful, inflicts an additional 2 dice of damage (determined by the weapon type). This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.

Instinctive Parry (General)

You can use your atheme to turn away otherwise lethal attacks.

Prerequisite: Covenant Duelist, Combat Reflexes

Benefit: Once per round, you may attempt to parry an incoming melee attack. Once per round, after a melee attack roll to hit you has been made, but before damage is assigned, you can attempt to parry the blow. Doing so uses up an attack of opportunity, and you cannot use this feat when denied your DEX bonus to Defense.

To parry an attack, you immediately roll an attack roll at your full BAB. If this attack roll equals or exceeds the incoming attack roll, you successfully parry the attack and suffer no damage.

You may only use this ability while armed with a knife, or short sword.

Instinctive Parry, Improved (General)

You are trained to defend not just yourself, but your allies with your flashing blades.

Prerequisite: Instinctive Parry

Benefit: You may attempt to parry incoming melee attacks targeting any ally you are adjacent to or who is in a square you would normally threaten.

Instinctive Vigilance (General)

Twenty-second Century America is a dangerous place, and you have trained yourself to respond to every faint sound and every flicker of movement glimpsed out of the corner of your eye.

Prerequisite: Awareness

Benefit: Your subconscious mind perceives danger-cues your conscious mind ignores. Any time you fail a Spot or Listen check to detect a trap or ambush, the gamemaster will secretly assign you a +1d6 insight bonus on your Defense score and REF save. This bonus remains in effect until the end of the resulting surprise round.

Jujitsu (General)

You are adept at using an opponent's strength and overconfidence against him.

Prerequisite: Defensive Martial Arts, Balance 4 ranks

Benefit: When making a Trip, Disarm or Grapple or check, you may use your opponent's Size and STR modifiers in place of your own if they are greater.

Sacrifice of Blades (General)

You have mastered a knife fighting style taught by the hardliner devotees of the blood-soaked goddess Bast. You do not shy away from the pain of your wounds, so long as you have a chance to make a killing strike against your tormentor. Your style is risky, but terrifyingly effective.

Prerequistes: Covenant Duelist, Iron Will

Benefit: You have learned a new combat technique, which is a modification of the Combat Expertise feat. Instead of lowering your attack bonus to increase your Defense, you can sacrifice

Defense for increased combat lethality.

You can voluntarily lower your Defense score by up to 12 points. For every 3 points of Defense you sacrifice, your Base Attack bonus increases by +1. Though temporarily, this bonus does increase your BAB, possibly granting you additional attacks. This temporary BAB increase does not increase your level or HD.

The bonus and associated penalty remains in effect until your next turn.

Sacrificial Ploy (General)

You intentionally leave gaps in your defenses, tempting your adversaries to make an incautious strike at you, while leaving themselves wide open for retaliation. You don't care if you end the fight bleeding as long as your enemy is bleeding too.

Prerequistes: Sacrifice of Blades

Benefit: You receive a +3 insight bonus on melee attack and damage rolls on any adjacent enemy who attempts an attack of opportunity against you. This bonus remains in effect for one round.

White Hand, Black Moon (General)

White Hand, Black Moon is a pagan fighting style designed to allow an empty handed practitioner to effortlessly dispatch superhumanly strong or cyber-enhanced opponents. Similar to the Lifer unarmed combat style, Rescue Judo, this soft style begins with a mastery of judo and focuses on turning opponents' strength againt their own joints and ligaments.

Many Covenant martial artists cover their hands in kid leather white gloves with weighted knuckles, paint or chalk their hands white or intricately tattoo themselves to symbolize their mastery of this style.

Prerequistes: Combat Martial Arts, Jujitsu, Concentration 4 ranks

Benefit: You may use your opponents STR modifier in place of your own when determining bonus damage on any unarmed attack.

Choicer Object Philosophies

Choicer Object Philosophies are based heavily upon traditional pagan beliefs, superstitions and rituals. Most Choicer Philosophies are 22nd Century versions of traditional New Age myths and beliefs, given tangible power by the para-science of Neural Conditioning. Choicer Philosophies tend to be strongly gender-biased, with a wide selection of abilities available only to Choicer heroines.

Animal Command (Object Philosophy)

By imitating the thought processes of empathic metahumans and Lifechains, you gain a deep connection to the natural world, and have can forge an empathic bond with animals. You can communicate with and command animals as easily, if not more easily, than you interact with other humanoids.

Prerequisites: Animal Affinity, Handle Animal 4 ranks

Benefit: You can communicate empathically with any creature with the animal, magical beast or vermin type, and at the game master's options, with similar but more exotic non-sentient creatures. Unless commanded to attack or guard, or threatened by you, most creatures of these type have an initial starting attitude of Indifferent towards you.

You can speak with and attempt to influence non-sentient creatures with a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check, as well as attempt to gain basic information about things the animal has experienced through simple empathic conversation.

A number of times per day equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum twice daily), you can take complete command of an animal's, magical beast's or vermin's body, operating the creature like a puppet. The creature must have an INT score of 3 or less to be affected by this ability. You may not command any creature with HD or CR greater than your total character level.

Unwilling animals receive a WILL Save to resist the effect (DC 10 + ½ your character level + your CHA modifier); success means that specific animal cannot be affected by this ability for 24 hours.

You can direct the animal's behavior, even commanding it to fight on your behalf as a full round action. You have total command over the creature, and can force it into suicidal behavior. You must have line of sight to command an animal in this manner.

The control effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to your CHA modifier (minimum one minute), and upon the end of the effect, most animals will attempt to flee your presence as rapidly as possible.

Animal Command, Improved (Object Philosophy)

You can compartmentalize your mind, becoming the leader of a large, mind controlled pack of servitor animals. You allow your subconscious mind to command your beasts, allowing you to act in concert with the pack.

Prerequisite: Animal Command

Benefit: The duration of your animal command ability is extended to a number of hours equal to your CHA modifier (minimum one hour). You may simultaneously command a number of creatures equal to your INT modifier. No single member of the pack may have more HD or CR greater than your own total character level, and the total pack can have a maximum HD equal to twice your total character level.

You instantly and effortlessly transmit commands to your mind controlled pack, allowing you to control your beasts as a free action. You may act normally while commanding your pack, but still require line of sight to your mind-dominated pack.

Anointed Atheme (Object Philosophy)

You have mastered a series of Philosophy-based weapon forms based on the use of a specific atheme in combat. You have forged a bond with a chosen blade, and customized inscribe your atheme's edge with prayers and invocations, wrapped it in colorful bumper stickers. Your combat atheme is a part of your body, and you are nearly unbeatable when it is in your hand.

Prerequisite: Base Attack Bonus +5, Covenant Duelist, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 8 ranks, Craft: visual arts 1 rank

Benefit: After a ceremony involving at least 8 hours of meditation and ritual combat, which requires you to decorate and customize your chosen weapon in accordance with your beliefs you attune yourself to a specific atheme. When fighting with your Anointed weapon, you receive a +2 morale bonus on damage rolls. If this Anointed Atheme is ever lost or stolen, the warrior can perform a new ceremony to bond to a new weapon.

It becomes incredibly difficult to separate a warrior from her Anointed Atheme. The soldier receives a +4 bonus to resist being disarmed, and even when unattended the Anointed weapon receives a +4 bonus on FORT Saves to resist damage. The weapon's Hardness is increased by a number of points equal to the soldier's WIS modifier.

A soldier can 'call' her weapon to herself as a full round action, which provokes attacks of opportunity. When called the weapon teleports itself to the warrior, appearing in her empty hand, if it is within ½ mile, and not currently in another creature's possession. This spatial warping ability is commonly explained an semi-unconscious psionic talent on the warrior's part, and the wielder is shaken for 1 round after teleporting the weapon to her.

As Below, So Above (Object Philosophy)

Disorder in the cosmos is reflected in disorder on earth, and vice versa. A Philosophy-capable witch's emotions can have a powerful influence on the world around her, setting into motion unpredictable coincidences, bizarre accidents and even causing the occasional miracle. Mastering this Philosophy means the witch recognizes the hidden connections between herself and the divine and benefits from it, while at the same time ensuring that her actions leave the world a better place than before.

Prerequisite: Knowledge: arcane lore 4 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Survival 4 ranks, Iron Will

Benefit: The Covenant's precogs find oracles and omens in the weather, seeking a glimpse of divine purpose in the storms and rain, the type of benefit the witch receives is tied to the current weather conditions. The benefit applies continually, changing as the weather does. A practitioner of this Philosophy always receives some bonus, but has no actual control over which bonus is granted.

All the benefits of this feat are considered morale bonuses, and normally only apply to the witch. However by spending an action point, and touching a willing recipient the witch can temporarily lose this feat, transferring its benefit to another person. The transfer lasts until the next sunrise, at which time the feat automatically returns to the witch.

Table: As Above, So Below

Type of Weather	Type of Morale Bonus Gained
Intense Heat	+4 to Bluff and Diplomacy checks made for seduction
Intense Cold or Snow	+ 2 to WILL Saves; +2 to all Knowledge checks
Fog or Duststorm	+2 to Hide and Move Silently, +2 bonus on Bluff checks made to feint in combat
Rain or thunderstorms	+1 to Defense, +2 to resist fear effects
Clear sunlit day	+2 to FORT saves, +2 to all Profession or Craft checks
Clear moonlit night	+2 to Balance, Climb and Knowledge (Arcane Lore, Behavioral Sciences, Theology &Philosophy)
Moonless night	+4 to Craft: Pharmaceutical, Gather Information, Handle Animal and Intimidate
Cosmic Phenomena (solar flares, eclipses magnetic storms, other galactic phenomena)	+2 to ranged attack rolls, +2 to Knowledge: physical sciences and Craft (mechanical or electronic) checks
Violent Weather (Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, ect)	+2 to attack and damage rolls

Bane Witch (Object Philosophy)

You can twist the strands of another's destiny, punishing their enemies for their crimes, mixing strega curses and old witchery with quantum physics and psi-training to deadly ends.

Prerequisite: Witch's Malkin

Benefit: Like the fearsome strega of old, you can call powerful curses down upon your enemies. You gain new uses for your Witch's Malkin, which becomes an extension of your will and a carrier of your legendary anger.

Your Witch's Malkin can deliver touch range spells on your behalf, as a living familiar. You may send your Witch's Malkin forth in its intangible, ghostly state. It may deliver spells in this manner by making an incorporeal touch attack against a target.

Once per day, you may summon your Malkin into existence and snuff out its life force, effectively slaying it until the next dawn. This is a full round action which provokes attacks of opportunity. Doing so provides the dark energy necessary to cast either inflict serious wounds, bestow curse or faith's fury as an acolyte of your total character level. You may afflict any targets within the spell's normal range, or may affect a known and hated target at any distance, so long as you have a sample of the target's genetic material (bone, skin, hair, semen, ect) or a weapon, item or clothing or article they have used within the past hour.

While casting this dark magic-like effect, you may voluntarily choose to suffer 1d4 points of temporary CON damage from karmic and psychokinetic backlash, opening hideous, stigmata-like wounds across your body. If you choose to do so, you receive a bonus on your caster level check to penetrate a target's Spell Resistance (if any) equal to your WIS modifier.

Action Enhancement: *By spending an action point during the casting, you can deny the target of your bane a saving throw against the effect.*

Birth of Hope (Object Philosophy)

Birth is a revolution act; pregnancy is political. This is a truth known by both sides of the Abortion War. Whether you hope to raise your children as soldiers in your army, or as inheritors of the utopian world you strive to build, you have great dreams for your children. This Philosophy is as common in the Lifer Enclaves as it is within the Choicer nation, as both cultures strive to dominate the next generation.

Prerequisite: You must have given birth to or fathered at least one child, and must be actively involved in raising the child. Creatures who reproduce asexually cannot select this feat.

Benefit: You receive a permanent +1 luck bonus on all saves for each child you parent (maximum +10 bonus). When acting to directly save the life of any of your children, you receive a similar bonus on all attack rolls made against anyone threatening your child.

Blade of the Storm (Object Philosophy)

You are a modern druid, a ritual priest or priestess of the storm. You can grant your command of the wind and rain to another, through the gift of a specially prepared atheme.

Prerequisites: Mother of Storms, Ancient Trusted Weapons

Benefit: During the long ceremony that allows you to control the storms, you may choose to bless an assortment of athemes (or other pagan weapons). By spending an action point during the eight hour ceremony, you may choose to bless a number of weapons equal to your INT modifier (minimum one blade). The weapons must be of masterwork quality, and must be ritually cleansed and purified.

Once the charging ritual is complete, the weapons you blessed are imbued with a portion of your own ability to command the weather, and seem to glow faintly with psychokinetic energy. The weather manipulating cleric can give the weapons to a chosen warrior, allowing the warrior to call upon the blade's power to manipulate the storm.

Once charged, the weapons can remain dormant for up to eight hours; if the power is not unleashed before that point, the ritual's psychic energy is wasted, and dissipates without effect. The weapon's wielder can unleash the power of the storm as a standard action. Once activated the weapon grants the wielder the ability to command the storms, as if they possessed the Mother of Storms feat, for a number of minutes equal to the storm-druid's INT modifier.

If the wielder loses contact with the weapon prior to the end of the effect's duration, the power is lost. The power is also lost if the imbued weapon is destroyed.

Cord Maiden (Object Philosophy)

You are an anointed priestess of the Goddess, and you have mastered the ability to bind the threads of a man or woman's life, offering protective blessings and magical enlightenment to those who share your beliefs. You can channel your psychic energy into a ritual cord, which acts as a strange kind of armor.

Prerequisite: Anointed Cleric, Cordspeaker, any neo-pagan allegiance

Special: Only females may select this feat.

Benefit: You may weave a ceremonial cord around the body of a champion who shares at least one allegiance with you. In addition to weaving the Cordspeaker ability into the knot, you grant a special blessing to the wearer of the knot, depending on where and how you first knot the cord around your champion's body.

Crafting an psi-enhanced cord requires at least half an hour, and must be knotted around the body of the person the cord is designed for. If worn by anyone other then the person who it is first knitted for, the cord is useless. The cord's wearer can remove and replace the cord as desired and retain the Philosophy's potency.

When the cord is first knotted, you must choose one of the following effects. A champion may not bear more than one cord-fetish at any given time.

- If you knot the cord around the champion's throat, he or she becomes immune to suffocation and inhalation toxins.
- If you knot the cord around the champion's forehead, he or she receives a bonus on all WILL Saves equal to your WIS modifier.
- If you knot the cord around the champion's eyes like a blindfold, he or she receives blindsight with a 30 ft radius.
- If you knot the cord around the champion's chest, he or she receives the effect of a mage armor spell, as cast by a mage of your total character level.

The cord's magic remains in effect for a number of days equal to your WIS modifier. While a champion wears a cord you have bound, you know instantly if that person is dies or succumbs to any form of mental control.

Cordspeaker (Object Philosophy)

You embrace both ancient mysticism and cutting edge psionic disciplines, creating a comforting and unbroken line of communications which incorporates ancient pagan knot magic and 22nd century Object Philosophy.

This unique psionic talent is displayed annually and is a vital part of Choicer politics. The Woven Circle, the legislative body of the Choicer nation, takes its name from the Cordbinding ceremony which begins each gathering of the circle, similar to the opening prayer of a Congressional session. Witches who have mastered this object philosophy are often referred to as recibidora.

Prerequisite: Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: You can create a set of ritual cords, worn on the hands, throat or on the forehead, which act as a psychic focus for long distance telepathic communication. By spending at least an hour constructing an intricately knotted cloth and plant-fiber cords, you establish a low-level psilink with other pagans. (Raw material for the cords and ritual implements are readily accessable and only have a Purchase DC of 6-8, often less.)

Each set of speaking cords is attuned to the group of pagans who came together to knot them. You can include as many believers in a knotting circle as desired, but all participants must have at least one rank in Knowledge: theology & philosophy. At least one member of the circle must possess this feat.

Once completed, the speaking cords allow members of the knotting circle to communicate wordlessly with the circle leader and with each other, so long as the cords are worn somewhere on the body. The cord's communication range is a number of miles equal to the total ranks in Knowledge: theology & philosophy of the crafting circle.

This silent, telepathic communication cannot be jammed or intercepted by conventional means. The Choicer military uses Speaking Cords as an ultra-secure, secondary communication method.

The cords retain their potency for a year and a day, or until any member of the crafting circle rejects their pagan beliefs and chooses a non-pagan faith or allegiance.

Combat Hymenoptera (Object Philosophy)

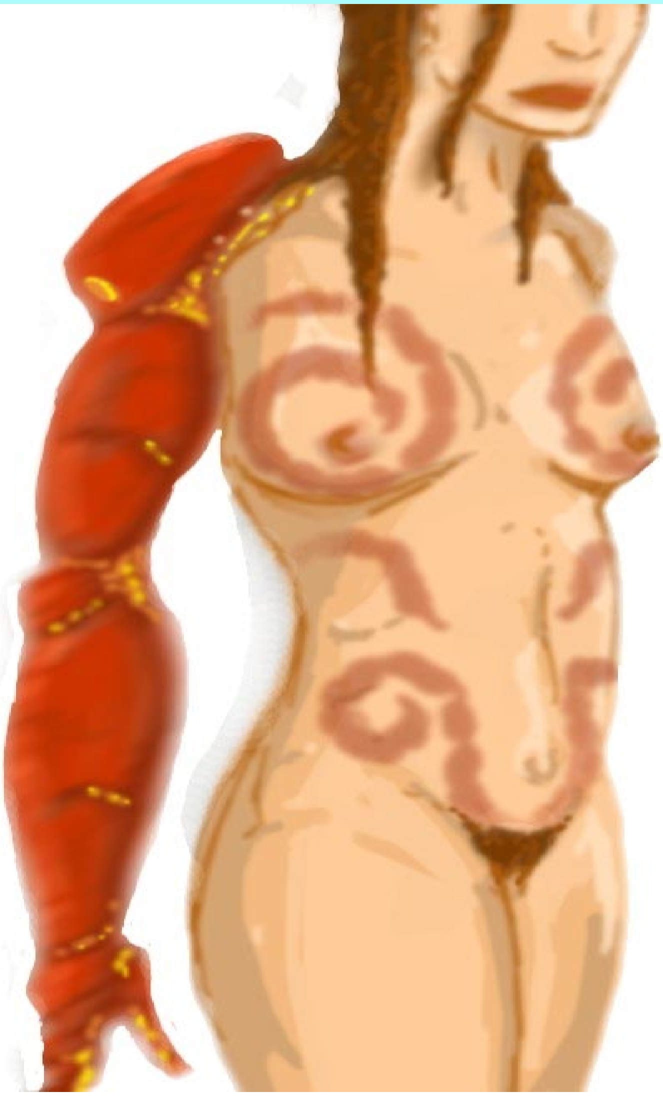
The spiraling tattoos that proclaim your nano-armor are permanently extended across your hands and face, and are tinged with black and gold filigree. Your colors are a warning to your enemies: your nano-colonies don't merely protect you. Instead, you can manifest a swarm of insect-like micro-robots to kill at a distance.

Prerequistes: Uterine Nano-Armor, Point Blank Shot

Benefit: As an attack action, you can manifest and fire a short ranged 'hymenoptera'- a microrobotic combat drone modeled on bee or wasp anatomy. This micro robot seems to emerge from beneath your skin. Your combat hymenoptera is treated as a ranged attack with a 60 ft maximum range. Once launched, the hymenoptera only has enough cellular energy for a single attack pass, and quickly disintegrates if it misses.

An adversary struck by the hymenoptera suffers 1d4 points of slashing damage, and is exposed to a particularly fearsome nano-based toxin. Initial and secondary damage from the hymenoptera toxin is 1d4 STR. The toxin's save DC is 10 + your CON modifier.

During the 5-7 days of your menstrual period, the toxin is far more deadly, as your nano-factories use trace iron and uterine DNA to manufacture an even more lethal toxin. During this time, the initial damage is 1d6 CON; secondary damage is 1d8 STR. The toxin's save DC is increased by +4.



Cyclic Ferocity (Object Philosophy)

The flow of your monthly blood brings you incredible strength and courage, allowing you to call on the ancestral memory of a thousand generations of female warriors.

"Bleeding in"- learning this feat- is one of the most important benchmarks in a woman's training as a member of a member of a Choicer special ops unit. The fact that males can never learn this unique combat-rite has become a rallying cry for proponents of an exclusively female Choicer spec-ops community.

Prerequisite: Moon Wise

Benefit: During the 4 to 7 days of your monthly menstrual period, you receive a +2 morale bonus to STR and DEX, and are considered immune to all fear effects. During the final day of your menstrual cycle, you gain Fast Healing 1.

Cynosure (Object Philosophy)

By sighting the 'dog's tail' or cynosure star (referred to in modern times as the North Star) as it rises over the horizon, you steal a few rays of divine light and can use your insight to achieve greatness that evening.

Prerequisite: Neo-Witch Astrology

Benefit: By performing a short, 5-10 minute ritual at dusk, you may catch sight of the North Star as it rises. If the ritual is performed you may call upon a precognitive flash of insight that evening. A number of times per evening equal to one plus your WIS modifier (minimum twice) you may call upon the power of the cynosure, and add a +20 insight bonus to any single attack roll or skill check.

You must call upon this power prior to rolling the check, and it functions similarly to the true strike spell. Using this ability is considered part of the action to be enhanced.

If you do not use the cynosure's power before dawn, the precognitive potential is lost without effect.

Dream the Future (Object Philosophy)

You can shape the path a child's life will take, offering mystical gifts which will manifest upon adulthood.

Prerequisite: Birth of Hope

Benefit: By spending an action point and touching any willing creature in the Child or Young Adult age category, you can alter the child's destiny and shape the path that child's life will take.

You may choose to either provide the child up to 8 total ranks in any skill or skills you possess, or any single feat you possess, including Lifechained, object philosophies, gene-feats and other unusual metahuman talents. Granted skill ranks are considered inherent bonuses, similar to racial skills and are not limited by the child's class level.

The gifts manifest the first night after the child undergoes puberty, performs a coming of age ceremony, after the child's first sexual experience or when the child gains his or her first heroic class level. You determine the triggering condition for the abilities.

You may only provide this benefit to a specific child once in the child's life, but like the old myths of three fairy godmothers granting a child their gifts, a particular child can benefit from the gift up to three times, from three different benefactors.

Earth Dancer (Object Philosophy)

You are a student of a militarized pagan eco-feminism- you call upon the Mother and dance between bullets and blades. The Earth is the body of your mother, and by drawing on an archetypical connection to the great goddess, you are capable of nearly superhuman speed and agility.

Prerequisite: Anointed Cleric, Acrobatic, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Tumble 4 ranks

Benefit: A number of times per day equal one plus to your DEX modifier (minimum twice daily), you can call upon your connection to the Earth to cast an effect similar to the haste spell on yourself. This enhancement lasts a number of rounds equal to your total character level. This feat provides several tactical benefits.

When making a full attack action, you may make one extra attack with any weapon you are holding. The attack is made using your full base attack bonus, plus any modifiers appropriate to the situation.

This effect is not cumulative with similar effects, such as that provided by a weapon of speed, nor does it actually grant an extra action, so you can't use it to cast a second spell or otherwise take an extra, non-attack action in the round.

You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls and a +1 dodge bonus to Defense and REF saves. Any condition that makes you lose your DEX bonus to Defense (if any) also makes you lose dodge bonuses.

All of the hasted creature's modes of movement (including land movement, burrow, climb, fly, and swim) increase by 30 feet. This increase counts as an enhancement bonus, and it affects the creature's jumping distance as normal for increased speed.

Special: This feat's benefits do not stack with similar magical or psionic effects, but can stack with themselves under specific conditions. By spending an action point when activating this feat, you may expend multiple daily uses of this feat simultaneously. This allows the bonus provided to stack. If you choose to expend 2 uses of this feat, your bonuses would be +2, you could take 2 additional attacks and your base land speed would increase by +60 ft.

Limitation: You may only use this feat when directly touching the Earth. You cannot use this feat through shoes, armor, or even through socks or a thin skinsuit, nor can you use this feat when your connection to the planet is blocked by asphalt or concrete.

Earth Witch (Object Philosophy)

You are a geomancer, capable of unlocking the psychic and chemical energy stored within gems and twisting this potent, pagan energy to your own ends. By shattering precious stones in your hand, you can unleash powerful post-human abilities: you can shred your opponents in a storm of diamond dust, enclose your body in ruby armor or rush sapphire courage through your veins.

Prerequisites: Earth Dancer, STR 13+, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 9 ranks

Benefit: By crushing a precious stone in your hand (possibly aided by a rush of supernatural or psionic strength) you can tap the latent geomantic energy of the stone to produce a variety of amazing effects, chosen at the moment you manifest the Philosophy.

The stone used in the Philosophy is a personal, cosmetic choice: any precious or semi precious stone can be used, but the stone always has a Purchase DC of 15 +1d4. Crushing the stone and utilizing the magic is a standard action, which provokes attacks of opportunity. Each time you call upon this feat, you may select any of the following Supernatural effects.

- Armor: You gain incredible durability and damage resistance, becoming as hard and unbreakable as gem. Your skin transforms to a living silicon/carbon carapace resembling the gem you sacrificed.

  While in this state, you receive a +8 natural Armor Bonus to Defense, and gain DR 5/-, which stacks with DR from other sources, including Tough Hero class levels. This enhancement lasts a number of minutes equal to your total character level.

  Drawback: While so enhanced, you are ponderous and slow moving. Your base land speed is reduced to 20 ft (if it was greater).

- Healing: You instantly recover a number of HP equal to the Purchase DC of the gem sacrificed plus your WIS modifier. Excess healing is wasted.

- Gemquake: Shattering the gem causes a localized earthquake, which affects all creatures within a 30 ft radius of you. Creatures in the tremor zone must make a REF save (DC 12 + your WIS modifier) or be knocked prone, suffering 1d6 points of subdual damage in the process.

- Increase: You cast any enhance ability spell as a mage of your total character level. You gain a +5 enhancement bonus to any single ability score, which lasts for a number of minutes equal to your total character level.

- Shardstorm: A fan of razor-sharp jewel shards bursts from your outstretched hand, inflicting 6d6 + your WIS modifier points of slashing damage to all creatures within a 15 ft cone. Creatures in the area of effect can attempt a REF Save (DC 12 + your WIS modifier) for half damage.

Geas of the Knot (Object Philosophy)

By concentrating on a specific person, usually a criminal or terrorist, while ritually knotting a length of Speaking Cord, you manifest a series of almost inescapable psychic bonds. The physical substance of the Knot becomes the scaffold for a psychic object, a mental prison designed to prevent further crime or violence without force, but with absolute certainty. a fragment of a murderer's soul into a complex not you ritually tie while imagining

Prerequisite: Anointed Cleric, Cordspeaker, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 8 ranks, Craft: visual arts 1 rank

Benefit: You may craft an intricate knot from ritual thread, performing a simple personal ceremony which requires at least 5 minutes of concentration. At the end of this ceremony, the knot you created is transfigured into a pattern of psionic energy. The psionic knot seems to vanish into your body, visible as a faintly glowing, shifting pattern of loops and whorls decorating your hands and forearms.

You may project your psi-knot as a ranged touch attack with a maximum range of 30 ft. Any creature hit with the psi-knot must succeed at a WILL Save (DC 12 + ½ your total character level + your WIS modifier) or fall victim to the binding psi-spell's effect.

A creature bound by the Geas of the Knot becomes permanently incapable of direct violence against a specific category of people or creatures, chosen by the knot-binder at the moment the knot is woven. This protected class can be a profession, members of a particular allegiance, class, race or species or all those of a specific alignment.

The bound victim cannot directly harm any member of the protected class. However, the victim's opinions and thoughts are unchanged. The victim can still take indirect action to harm you, plot against you, attack your un-protected allies or act against you in other ways.

Dr. Miranda Raxwire
Covenant Psi-Binder

You are instantly aware if the victim is successfully bound. Once 'fired' the psychic knot is expended, and you must craft a new knot. You may store a prepared psionic Knot for up to 24 hours, or until you next sleep. If not used before this time, the energy is wasted and vanishes without effect.

Lion of Choice (Object Philosophy)

"Like an awesome lion, you annihilated with your venom the hostile and disobedient."
- Ancient Sumerian poem addressing the goddess Inanna-Ishtar

One of the central tenets of the worship of the goddess Bast is that death is inevitable and that all humans are divinely empowered with the choice of when and why to kill. Like the remorseless great cats, Bastian hardliners believe that to allow Christian oppressors to live is causes infinitely more karmic harm than a sanctioned execution, and they slay the enemies of their faith and their reproductive freedom with an executioner's dispassion.

Prerequisite: Aligned Zealot, Meaningful Ink, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 8 ranks, an allegiance to the Bastian faith or towards an allied unit, group or cause

Benefit: Once per day, you may recite the name and crimes of any specific enemy of the Bastian faith. Doing so requires a somber recitation of charges, requiring several minutes, and an impassioned prayer to the cat-goddess demanding redress of these wrongs. The victim must have directly caused harm (physical, financial, spiritual or politically) to a member of the Bastian cult, to any other witch or neo-pagan or to the pro-choice movement.

Once the 10-20 minute long ritual is completed, you enter a lethal war-trance, referred to among the faithful as becoming a Lion of Choice. For a number of hours equal to your total character level, or until you next sleep, whichever is sooner, you may make all *coup de gras* attacks against the target of your vengeance as a standard action.

While this Philosophy is manifest, your features change slightly. Subcutaneous fat deposits are redistributed and voluntary facial muscles are paralyzed, turning the Bastian warrior's mortal face into a lean, impassive war-mask. You suffer a -2 penalty on all CHA based skill checks, except for Intimidate for the duration of the effect.

Action Enhancement: At any time while you are the Lion of Choice, you can spend an action point to make your coup de gras even deadlier. If you spend an action point prior to making an attack, the coup de gras' FORT Save DC is increased by +5. This enhancement lasts until the Philosophy ends.

Normal: *Coup de gras* attacks are full round actions.

Luck of the Witches (Object Philosophy)

You can rewrite fate to benefit yourself or those you love, turning your enemy's killing blows into minor scrapes, and transforming certain death into a difficult victory.

Prerequisite: Cynosure

Benefit: Each day you receive a pool of 'jinx' points equal to your level plus your CHA modifier (minimum two jinx points). You may use these points to worsen the luck of those around you.

You may apply one or more jinx points to any die roll (saves, skill checks, attack rolls, die rolls to determine random events) made within 30 ft. You may choose to apply as many 'jinx' points as you like, up to twice your CHA modifier on any single roll. Applying 'jinx' points is a purely mental free action.

You may expend one of your daily uses of the Cynosure feat to inflict a –20 penalty on a skill check or attack roll made by an enemy within 30 ft.

You may choose to use either aspect of this feat after your enemy rolls the check, but before the results are announced.

Limitation: You may not use this feat to hinder any sentient creature with a pagan or similar allegiance.

Maternal Warrior (Object Philosophy)

You are both an elite soldier and a mother, and you are at your most dangerous, with finely honed instincts and a lioness's killer instinct, while defending the living cargo inside you.

Prerequisites: Cyclic Ferocity

Benefit: You receive the benefits of the Cyclic Ferocity feat for the duration of your pregnancy and while nursing a newborn. You receive a +2 bonus to STR and DEX, and during your final 12 weeks of pregnancy, both you and your fetus receive Fast Healing 1.

During your pregnancy, you gain lowlight vision, as per the Moonwise feat. You do not suffer the normal attribute penalties for being pregnant.

Moon Crafter (Object Philosophy)

You organize your life in accordance to the ebb and flow of your menstrual blood, and use your connection to the Moon and the Goddess to achieve great success.

Prerequisite: Moon Wise

Benefit: While menstruating, you may dab a droplet of your blood upon a project you are attempting to complete. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to one plus your CON modifier (minimum twice daily).

Doing so allows you a bonus on any Craft, Computer Use, Disable Device, Repair or Treat Injury Check equal to your CON modifier (minimum +1 bonus) If applying your blood to an injured patient, you may choose to apply this benefit or the psionic healing provided by the Moonwise feat, or both. Blood daubed on an injured patient is altered by the psionic nature of this feat, and will not transmit disease or break sterility.

Moon Wise (Object Philosophy)

Your first menstrual flow was marked by a private ceremony with several elder priestess-midwives, and spiraling nano-tattoos run the inside of your thighs, in commemoration of your monthly blood. You are in tune with the calendar of the moon and your own menstrual flows, and this knowledge grants impressive near-psionic gifts.

Prerequisite: Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Treat Injury 4 ranks

Benefit: During a 4-7 day period each month, chosen when this feat is first selected, you gain an assortment of minor supernatural talents. During your menstrual cycle, your connection to the natural world is sharpened, granting you low light vision with a range of 60 ft (or increasing existing lowlight vision by 60 ft).

In addition, a number of times per day equal to your CON modifier (minimum once daily), you may daub a droplet of your menstrual blood on a wounded creature to speed his recovery. Doing so is a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The touched creature instantly recovers a number of HP equal to 1 + your CON modifier (minimum 2 HP recovered).

Once the character reaches the Middle Age category and undergoes menopause (or removes her reproductive capability through permanent genetic or cybernetic alteration), she retains the benefits of this feat and other feats in the chain at all times.

Special: Only females can choose this feat.

Moon's Teacher (Object Philosophy)

You can teach others the ancient pagan secrets of menstruation and blood ceremonies. Choicer priestesses mark their mastery of this Philosophy with intricate crimson tattoos across their thighs and abdomen, and occasionally across their face, throat or hands.

Prerequisite: Moonwise, Anointed Cleric

Benefit: By engaging in a day long ritual with any willing, menstruating female creature and spending an action point, you may grant that woman the Moon Wise feat, even if she does not meet the Prerequisites.

Mother of Storms (Object Philosophy)

You can cry out to the heavens and call down storms, lightning and thunder. The forces of climate and weather are yours to manipulate. You have mastered a Philosophy enhanced series of pagan spells and invocations to the many goddesses, and have learned alpha-level psychokinetic talents that let you manipulate weather on a quantum level, solely through the strength of your belief.

Prerequisites: As Above So Below, Meaningful Ink, High Cleric, and Knowledge: theology & philosophy 12 ranks, Knowledge: natural science 4 ranks

Benefit: You gain the ability to manipulate the Earth's climate, at least on a local level. By undertaking an 8 hour long trance state, you charge your mind and body with the ability to manipulate the weather.

Once the ritual is complete, your body is charged with arcane and psionic power for eight hours, or until you next sleep. While 'charged' you can influence the weather as a full round action.

As a full round action, you can raise or lower the ambient temperature in a 1 mile radius by + or – 10 degrees F per round, to a maximum of 120 degrees or 0 degrees F at either extreme. You can increase or decrease wind speed by 10-15 miles per round, creating winds in excess of 150 mph (hurricane force) after several rounds.

You can create intense rainstorms, snowstorms, fog or light drizzle, or clear the skies. If creating intense rainstorms or snow and doing nothing else for the duration of the effect, you can produce a number of inches of downpour over the area equal to your WIS score, probably causing localized flooding or deep, dangerous snowdrifts.

The weather remains as you 'set it' until the effect ends, or until you concentrate on changing the climate once again. You do not need to concentrate on maintaining an altered condition.

As a full round action, you can attack your enemies with the climate. You can either create a lightning strike or summon an ultra-short lived tornado. You may summon these hazards anywhere within your field of vision; they are treated as area effect weapons with a 30 ft burst radius.

A lightning strike inflicts 4d6 + WIS modifier points of electrical damage; a micro-tornado inflicts 6d6 + WIS modifier points of bludgeoning damage. Victims caught within the area of affect can attempt a REF Save (DC 10 + your WIS modifier) for half damage.

Once the eight hour period of weather control ends, you are *exhausted* and suffer 1d6 points each of temporary INT, WIS and CHA damage as a result of the psionic feedback and sheer psychic fatigue involved in such an impressive feat.

Neo-Witch Astrology (Object Philosophy)

Once per night, you can read the night sky and see omens there. You have learned the secrets of the horoscope, the rotations of the planets and the zodiac; your dreams touch the human collective unconscious and give you occasional glimpses of the future.

Prerequisites: WIS 13+, Anointed Cleric, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: By spending an hour reading the stars, the pagan astrologer can cast augury with a flat 75% chance of success, and which concerns events that may happen that same night. The augury can also concern questions pertaining to romance, reproduction and family life, or the political or military future of the Covenant. In this case, the augury can foresee events up to three days in the future, with a flat 50% chance of success.

Obviously, the caster must be able to see the stars, so this feat ability is useless during daylight, underground, in a brightly lit city at night, or when indoors in a windowless building. This ability is usable once per night.

Special: If in space or traveling on a starship when you manifest this Philosophy, the percentage chance of a successful reading increases by +15%.

Personal Coda (Object Philosophy)

You believe in a single, all important cause with unshakable faith. No force on earth can make you break your faith, and when you act in the name of your cause you do so with incredible confidence.

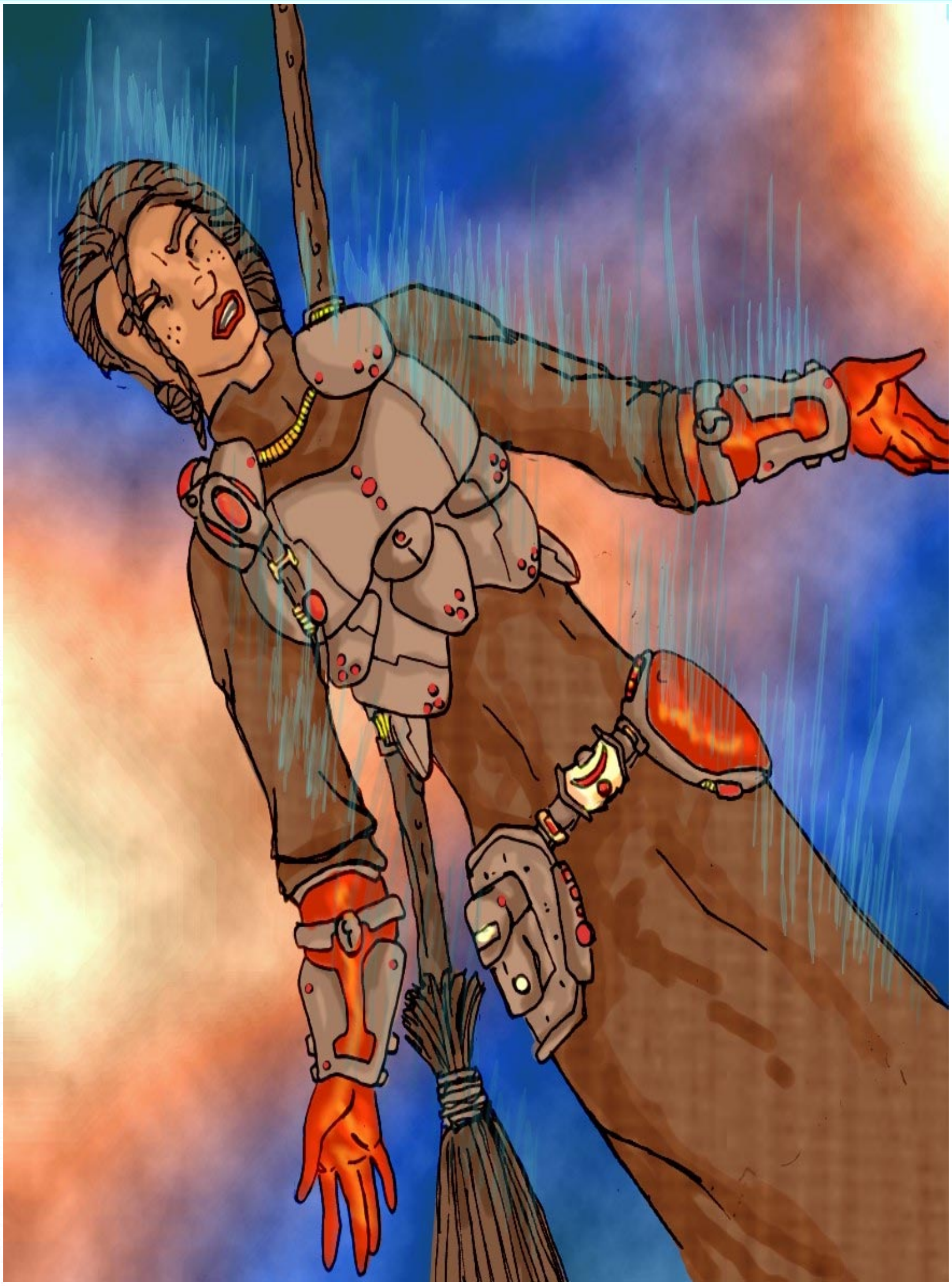
Prerequisite: any declared allegiance

Benefit: Once per day, when acting in accordance with the goals and beliefs of your primary allegiance, you receive a +2 morale bonus on all skill checks, attack rolls and saving throws. This benefit lasts for a number of minutes equal to your CHA score.

If you are ever mentally controlled, either through technological, psionic or magical means, and the commands you receive would cause you to violate the tenants of your faith or personal code of honor, you receive an additional WILL save to break the controlling effect.

Soldier Name (Object Philosophy)

Personal identity is subsumed into the needs of your cause. You give up your birth name and your previous identity remaking yourself as a warrior



utterly committed to your beliefs.

Choicer activists might take the name reflecting their patron goddess, or rename themselves Choice or Salem, assuming a portion of the identity of their most famous exemplars. Lifer soldiers adopt the non-identity of Never-Born or the Ghost, an utterly committed soldier for the preborn.

Prerequisite: Meaningful Ink or Personal Coda, Renown

Benefit: During a public and militaristic ceremony attended my others sharing your allegiance, you legally change your name to a code-name symbolizing your beliefs. This code-name may incorporate elements from your movement's history or reference the names or call signs of your allegiance's greatest champions.

You receive a +5 bonus to your Reputation score among those sharing your allegiance, making you an influential voice in the movement. This bonus stacks with the more general bonus provided by the Renown feat.

A number of times per day equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum twice daily), you may declare your soldier name and allegiance on the battlefield. Doing so is a standard action which does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Any sentient creature hostile to your primary allegiance within 30 ft you can clearly see and hear you must succeed at a WILL Save (DC 10 + ½ your character level + your CHA modifier) or be overcome by debilitating thought-virus.

For 1d3 rounds, any enemy who fails his or her save fights sloppily, and during that time, all actions they take during battle always provoke attacks of opportunity.

Uterine Nano-Armor (Object Philosophy)

The nano-tattoos that mark your menarche extend across your body. When energized with iron siphoned from your body, these symbiotic nano-colonies crawl across your skin. Symbolizing the blood shed by Choicer and pagan martyrs throughout history, your nano-marks act as light, ultra-concealable body armor during your monthly flows.

Prerequisite: Moonwise, Meaningful Ink

Benefit: A symbiotic nanotech virus introduced into your body alters the way your body responds to its menstrual cycle. You can begin your menstrual cycle at will, lasting five to seven days out of every 28. You may also choose to menstruate one day at a time, spreading the cycle throughout the lunar month.

While menstruating, your protective nano-infection spreads to the intricate tattoos covering your face and body. During your menstrual cycle, you receive a +2 deflection to Defense. Your iron-fortified nanonics generate an ultra-low grade forceshield a few millimeters from the surface of your skin.

Witch's Malkin (Object Philosophy)

Like the witches of medieval legend, you have a familiar- a creature that is part beast, but mostly spirit. You dream your familiar into being, a constant loyal friend and companion who can stalk invisibly for you and acts fearlessly to defend its creator.

Prerequisite: Anointed Cleric, Iron Will, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: You may select any creature with the animal, magical beast, or vermin type, provided it has an Intelligence score of 5 or less, and is CR 3 or weaker. You create an 'imaginary' animal companion using that creature as a template, and bring the creature to life through will and belief, creating a 'living' object philosophy.

Your malkin follows you loyally, staying at your side at all times, unless commanded to venture forth on your behalf. You may command your ghostly familiar to scout on your behalf, and as a full round action, may see through its eyes and take direct control of the thought-beast in battle. You are helpless while directly commanding your Malkin, but may awaken from your trance state at any time, as a standard action.

You may also dismiss your spirit at will, allowing it to return to your dreams. A dismissed ghostly familiar reappears in 1d4 rounds after you mentally 'summon' it from your subconscious.

The malkin is normally an intangible, wraith-like entity, resembling a holographic animal or creature. The malkin has a +4 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks and can naturally see and interact with *invisible, astral* and *ethereal* creatures.

A number of times per day equal to your WIS modifier (minimum once daily) you can will your malkin fully into our reality, animating it with low-level psychokinesis. The creature becomes completely visible and tangible, and remains so for a number of minutes equal to your WIS modifier. While in solid form, the creature can be 'slain'. When this occurs, the creature and it's master are both considered *shaken* for 1d6 rounds. A slain malkin cannot be solidified again for 24 hours.

Your malkin cannot range more than 1 mile from you. If moved farther away than that, the creature fades from reality and reappears at your side within 24 hours. If you die or are knocked unconscious, the malkin automatically vanishes from existence as well.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times, creating an entire menagerie of almost-imaginary malkins.

Intangibles: Numbers of the Beast

Certain dates and specific numbers recur frequently throughout the Otherverse setting, chosen for their mystic or political symbolism. The Abortion War began, and ended (and began anew) on January 22nd, the anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* decision. Many Choicer object philosophies have durations measured in 28 day cycles- a time period as long as the human menstrual cycle, while other powers have a duration of a year and a day (366 days), a number drawn from old pagan ritual. Thirteen is the traditional witch's number, and some tradition-bound covens restrict their membership to 13 members, while other have membership rosters numbering in the hundreds. The Woven Circle (the Covenant's legislative body) is organized into 3 ranks of 13 members, for a total of 39 legislators and a single High Priestess.

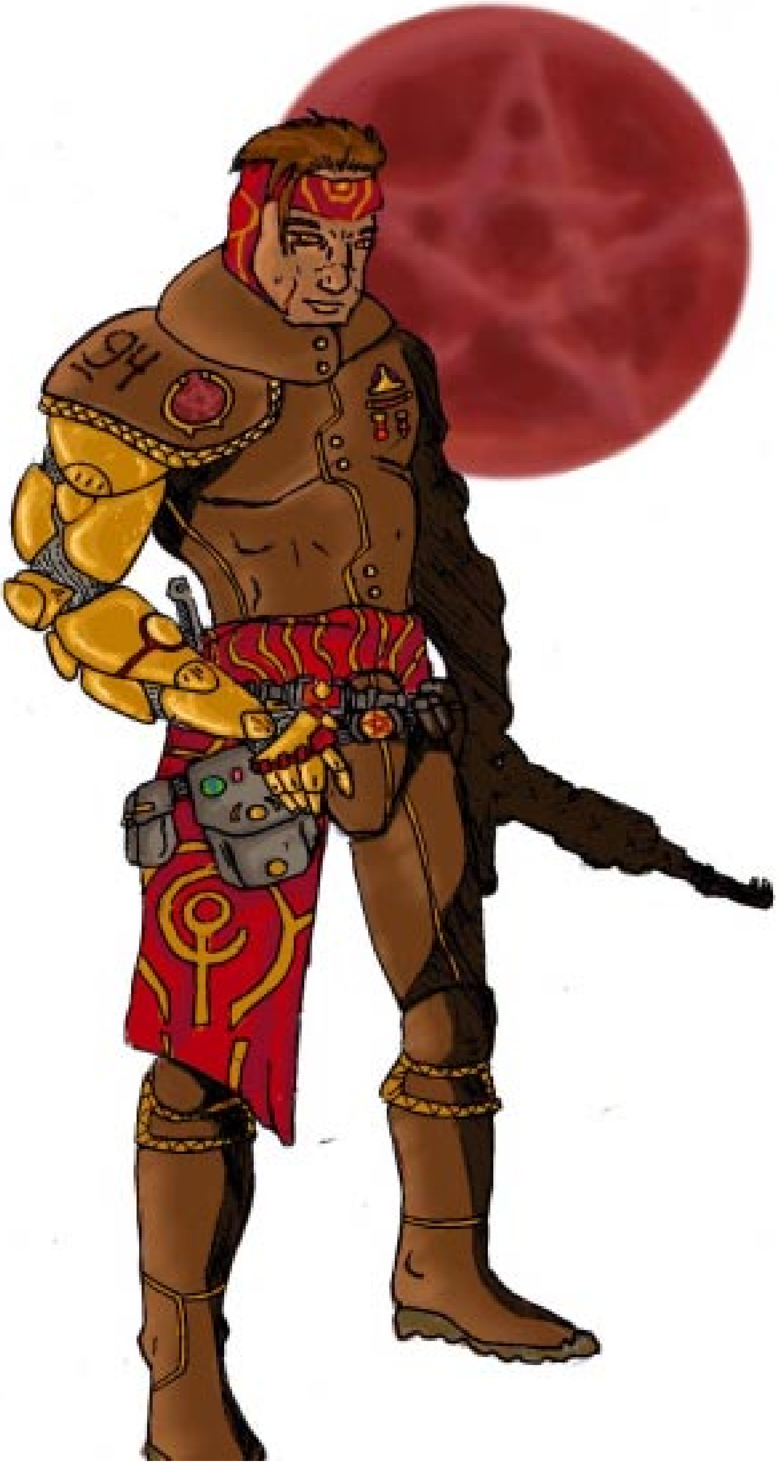
The Lifer nation is steeped in Christian mysticism and pre-apocalyptic dogma, and its citizens are constantly on the watch for numbers of Biblical significance. Numbers like 666 (or the more modern 616) are feared, and any variant of either of those numbers, whether as a product code, unit ID number, cell or Mesh prefix, instantly arouses their attention. The Lifers view the world in terms of half-understood, enigmatic prophecies, and Lifer citizens can spend hours debating which exactly Choicer metahumans and politicos are symbolized by the ciphers within Revelations.

Seventy-three is an important (if unlucky) number for the Lifer movement. Recalling 1973, the year *Roe vs Wade* was handed down, the numbers 1973 or just '73 have found their ways into many Lifer art forms and propaganda. Many Lifers wear t-shirts or tattoos declaring that they "survived '73", and 73 has become a kind of numerical euphemism for abortion. Likewise, Lifer propaganda often features either 1/3 or ¼, representing the third (or quarter) of American pregnancies that end in abortion, depending on who does your demographic research.

One number you won't see often is 4-20. I've intentionally downplayed the importance of April 20th, Hitler's birthday and a date celebrated by the American militia movement. While the 21st century right-to-life movement and the modern militia/white power movements have some disturbing commonalities, the Lifer nation has made actual efforts to purge the worst white-power bigots from its ranks. The Lifers are villains, I make no bones about that, but they're understandable, noble and to some degree….redeemable villains. The Lifers are far more racially inclusive than their right-wing 21st century counterparts.

The Covenguard Advanced Class

“And the High Priestess shall rule her coven as the representative of the Goddess. And the High Priest shall support her as the representative of the God.”
-Traditional Laws of Witchcraft



The Covenguard defends the coven and its priestesses, with his life and soul if necessary. Covenguard soldiers are modern paladins and questing knights, the chosen champions of technologically advanced, politicized abortion priestesses and the guardians of an embattled faith. Like the women they protect, Covenguards enhance their bodies with extensive cybernetic reconstruction and onboard weapons.

These elite, highly motivated bodyguards dedicate themselves to the protection of pagan America and survival of Choicer culture. They can be thought of as warrior priests, embodying the strength and protectiveness of the male archetype; worshippers of war-gods and fertility kings who bind themselves, body and soul, to the women whose cause they champion.

Profile of a Covenguard

Covenguards are powerful, cybernetically enhanced super-soldiers, utterly committed to protecting their sworn charges. Covenguard warriors are among the most elite, most respected Choicer soldiers; experienced Covenguard protectors accompany the highest ranking priestesses in the Covenant Universal. Covenguard act not only as bodyguards, protecting Choicer VIPS, the Woven Circle and embattled abortion providers across the country, they are also skilled commanders. Their mastery of urban warfare and defensive action means many Covenguard veterans play an important tactical role in the Choicer military. Covenguards are often given command over Choicer counter-terrorist ops and protective details, and many of the Covenant’s highest ranking male soldiers are drawn from their ranks.

Covenguard are empowered through Philosophy-based rituals and a knightly devotion to protecting the lives and freedom of women. Their already impressive abilities are enhanced by their onboard nanotech cybersystems and integrated weapons. The only way to stop a Covenguard from keeping his oath of protection is to kill him, and Covenguard don't die easily.

The fastest path into the Covenguard Advanced Class is through the Tough Hero basic class, though other paths are possible. Dedicated Heroes turned Covenguard are incredibly effective, and their religious knowledge allows them to participate more fully in the spiritual life of their coven.

The Covenguard in the Campaign

Daniel Calderon threw open the great bronze and oak doors of the assembly hall, and stepped through first, more out of habit than actual anticipation of danger. He raised his bionic hand to the level of his breast, and in a simple gesture interrogated the chamber's security-AI for any potential threats. His onboard sensors scanned the quiet, still air for combustibles, bio-war agents, hostile smart-virals, and as he expected, he found none. He stepped across the threshold and into ventured fully into the cavernous chamber.

Lights woke up as he passed, and smartlight computer systems began activating in the air all around him. Within seconds of his entry, the chamber of thirty-nine and one seats was filled with humming golden light, while environmental minders released sanitary nanos and the faint ghost of intelligence-enhancing incense. Of course, Daniel automatically ran the scents through his bionics' threat detectors, knowing all too well the deadly imagination of Lifer terrorists.

With measured and disciplined steps, Daniel took his place at the head of the chamber, directly behind the High Priestess's seat. He watched, as the thirty nine men and women of the Woven Circle filled the chamber, taking their familiar places, and listened with half an ear to their conversations. The big man relaxed into a loose parade-rest, only his eyes moving, occasionally flickering up to the speaking hall's stained glass ceiling, where the Great Goddess was creating the galaxy in a spray of breast milk. He ignored the icon, having seen it a thousand times and more, staring out into the air space beyond the stained glass and the island's forcefields, wanting to confirm with his own eyes what his sense-link to the Choicer air-defense net was telling him: no threats, clean airspace.

Daniel's eyes flickered back down as High Priestess Nicellos took her place at council table, knees popping as she settled down. She gave her protector a quick glance, and the otherwise somber Daniel smiled back, for just a second. And than, back to his duty, the words between them not needing to be spoken. He returned to his vigil, eyes glancing up at the sky above them every so often, while the High Priestess said the words that began the council session…..

The Covenguard is going to be a Choicer squad's 'brick'- strong, tough and frighteningly durable, able to absorb punishment that would kill one of his pagan charges. Designed for front-line combat and protection, the Covenguard is Choicer America's equivalent to the Bodyguard advanced class.

The Covenguard trades some of the Bodyguard's practicality and tactical expertise for a leadership role within a religious hierocracy and mystic abilities drawn from his emotional connection to the Horned God. Covenguard are modern paladins, balancing mundane and cyber-driven combat skill with belief-based abilities best described as miraculous.

Requirements:
To qualify to become a Covenguard, a character must fulfill the following criteria.
Base Attack Bonus: +3
Skills: Concentration 6 ranks, Intimidate 4 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank, Spot 4 ranks
Feats: Alertness, Chivalrous Defender, Martial Weapons Proficiency
Gender: Only males are allowed to become Covenguard paladins.

Special: A potential Covenguard must have declared at least one of his allegiances to the Covenant of the Goddess Universal, to any Choicer or pagan group, or towards a particular pagan leader. The Covenguard must be an active member of a Neo-Witch coven.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Covenguard advanced class.

Hit Die

The Covenguard gains d10+2 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Covenguard warriors undergo a grueling conditioning regimen, and their bodies are enhanced by military grade genemods and nano-tech infections, ensuring they rapidly earn the legendary toughness the class is celebrated for.

Action Points

The Covenguard gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Covenguard's class skills are as follows.

Concentration (CON), Demolitions (INT), Drive (DEX), Gather Information (CHA), Intimidate (CHA), Knowledge (arcane lore, behavioral sciences, current events, history, physical sciences, streetwise, tactics, theology & philosophy) (INT), Listen (WIS), Pilot (DEX), Profession (WIS), Read/Write Language, Search (WIS), Sense Motive (WIS), Speak Language, Spot (WIS)

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + INT Modifier

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Covenguard may select a bonus feat, which must be chosen from the following list:

Aligned Zealot, Animal Affinity, Annointed Cleric, Armor Proficency (any), Attentive, Battle Hardened, Bear Another's Burdens, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Controlled Burst, Full Autofire, Heroic Surge, High Cleric, Improved Brawl, Improved Feint, Instinctive Vigilance, Meaningful Ink, Precision Fire, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Two Weapon Fighting, Track, Vehicle Expert, Wise Sensi

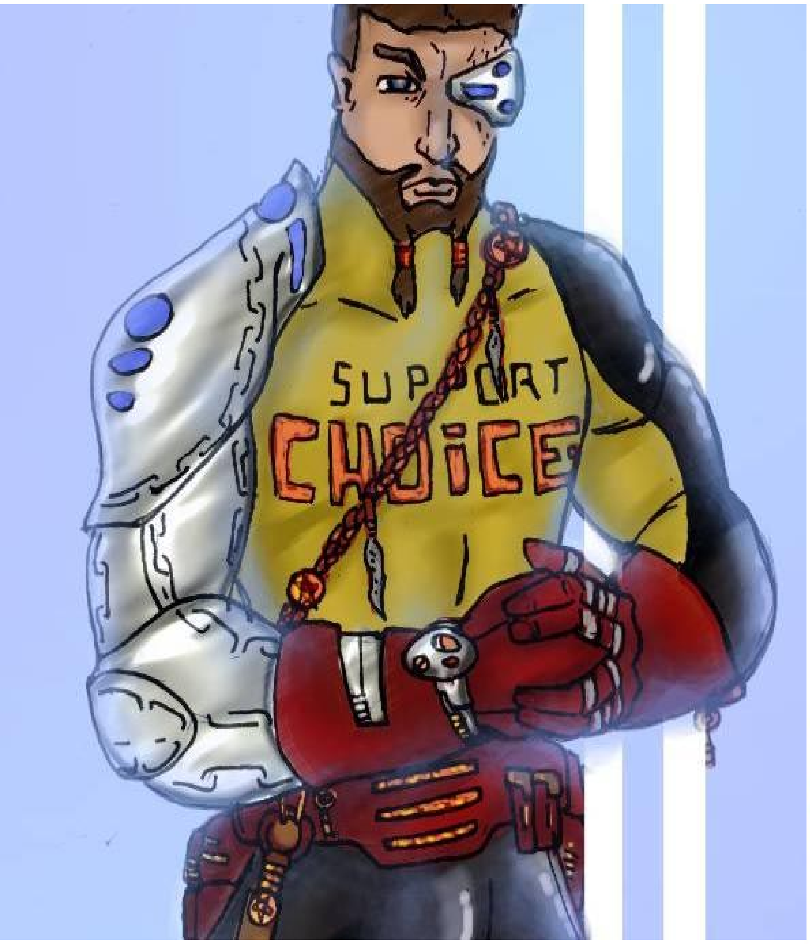
Table: The Covenguard Advanced Class

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FOR-T Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+0	+0	Arms & Atheme , Covenant Duelist, Oaths Spoken	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+0	My Life For Yours	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+1	Lantern of the Coven, Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+4	+1	+1	Grail Knight's Armory	+2	+1
5th	+3	+4	+1	+1	Great Rite	+3	+1
6th	+4	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+5	+2	+2	Dream of Strength	+4	+2
8th	+6	+6	+2	+2	Shared Strength	+4	+2
9th	+6	+6	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+7	+3	+3	Return in Times of Need	+5	+3

The Covenguard may always select a Choicer feat as a class-based bonus feat.

Arms & Atheme (EX): During their induction into the coven, and as they swear their vows of justice and courage, Covenguard warriors are implanted with collection of innovative nanonic cyber-implants. In imitation of the Obstestrix Nanonics of the Midwives they protect, the dominant hand and arm of a young Covenguard are transformed into powerful, bio-cybernetic analogues with targeted nano-infections.

Unlike the sleek, blood red Obstetrix Nanonics, the Covenguard's knightly arms are heavy armored, durable combat models. The cyborg limbs are colored in warm oranges, yellows, golds, brown and metallic grays, and are often decorated with patterns and acid etched sigils representing the many faces of the God.



The Covenguard's cybernetics can alter their form and function to better serve and protect the coven. The Covenguard may manifest his atheme at any time, and may use any feats requiring an atheme in conjunction with his cyber arm.

The Covenguard's cyber-arm can transform into any Small or Medium sized simple or martial melee weapon. These weapons function identically to their standard counterpart, and are so well balanced and well designed they are considered masterwork, providing a +1 bonus on attack rolls.

The Covenguard can also shape his nanonics into a buckler-like shield, which provides a +2 shield bonus to Defense and has no armor check or spell failure chance. However, the soldier cannot also hold a weapon or tool while manifesting a shield.

The Covenguard's extensive and versatile cyber-systems can transform themselves into a larger shield, similar to SWAT riot-shields. The heavy shield inflicts a –2 armor check penalty, and the cyborg cannot carry or use a weapon in hand while the shield is manifested. When deployed, the cyborg receives a +4 shield bonus to Defense, and can claim ½ cover from the large shield when taking total defense.

The Covenguard's cyber-weapons cannot be disarmed, and if sundered the system shock forces the nanotech into a regenerative cycle, shutting down the cyber limb for 2d4 hours while undergoing system diagnostics. The nano-limb recovers hit points at the same rate as normal human tissue, and does not count towards the Covenguard's total number of implants (*does not have a Drain rating*).

The Covenguard's cyber limb is designed for military use, not medical care, but it is still a versatile, practical piece of equipment. Production modules built into the artificial bone allow the Covenguard to produce a useful array of gadgets or devices.

As a full round action, usable at will, the cyberlimb can use onboard nano-factories to produce any of the following useful gadgets: a set of caltrops, a pair of zipline handcuffs, or an ordinary quality lockpick set. The cyborg can wireless beam electrical power from his cyberlimb to any personal electronic device within 5 ft.

Special: A multiclass Covenguard's cyberlimb is considered a *holy symbol* for purposes of divine abilities, such as turning undead or casting spells requring a divine focus. Weapons manifested via the nanonics are treated as Holy and Good Aligned weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Covenant Duelist (EX): A first level Covenguard begins extensive training with a combat-wieghted atheme, and learns the secrets of pagan knife fighting. The Covenguard receives Covenant Duelist as a class based bonus feat even if he does not meet the prerequistes.

If the Covenguard already has this feat, he may choose any one of the following feats instead: Ancient, Trusted Weapons, Instinctive Parry, or Sacrifice of Blades.

Oaths Spoken (SU): A Covenguard is knighted with great ceremony, inducted into the role of protector and witch's champion before the assembled coven and the watching Lords and Ladies. If the Covenguard knowingly violates the tenants of his faith, or ever fails to defend or assist a pagan or woman in need, he loses all Philosophy derived (supernatural) class abilities for 24 hours.

If he ever knowingly commits an evil act or becomes a member of another faith, he loses the class's supernatural talents forever.

My Life For Yours (SU): A Covenguard will sacrifice much in the defense of their faith and the witch-women they love above all else, and will die if necessary to protect them.

The Covenguard may elect to place himself in the path of danger to protect a single ally, who must either be a woman (of any faith), or a pagan (of either gender). Once per round, if the Covenguard is adjacent to an eligible ally who is targeted by a direct attack, including spells or psi-talents, (though not an area effect) the Covenguard can subject himself to the attack in the ally's stead. If the attack hits the Covenguard, he suffers damage normally. If it misses, it also misses the ally.

The Covenguard must declare his intention to place himself in harm's way before the attack roll is made. Unlike the similar Bodyguard class ability, the Covenguard may select a new eligible ally to protect each round. The two abilities stack in the case of multiclass characters.

If the Covenguard is slain while using this class features, all pagan allies who can clearly see the Covenguard's demise receive a temporary action point, which must be spent before the end of the encounter, or it is lost.

Lantern of the Coven (SU): Beginning at 3rd level, the Covenguard radiates an aura of strength and determination. He becomes immune to fear, including magic and psionic fear-based attacks. The Covenguard radiates an aura of mental strength, which provides each ally within 30 ft of the soldier a +4 morale bonus on WILL Saves against fear effects. This ability functions while the Covenguard is conscious, but not if he is knocked unconscious or dies.

Grail Knight's Armory (EX): As the Covenguard's faith evolves and he gains experience, his already impressive cyber weapons mutate in accordance with his will and the neo-knightly traditions of his order.

Ribbons of living steel twine around the Covenguard's body, and his fragile human organs are replaced with an indestructible heart of bio-metal. When angry, aroused or frightened, the steel bands glow with arcane sigils; many Covenguard soldiers can manifest spectacular antler-like arrays or horns at will. These decorative nanotech appendages retreat into the cyber-knight's skull when not in use and are most commonly seen during rituals or threat displays.

The Covenguard's body is pushed into the post-human range. The Covenguard receives a permanent +2 enhancement bonus to his CON score, and he may choose to receive a +1 enhancement to either his STR or CHA score.

The Covenguard develops redundant organs- strange techno-organic systems- which make him incredibly difficult to kill. The Covenguard has a 25 % chance of ignoring the effects of any critical hit, like a creature with the *light fortification* ability. This resistance increases to 50 % at 7th level.

Great Rite (SU): The foundation of Neo-Wiccan theology is the balance of opposites, the union of masculine and feminine energy symbolized by the sexual and spiritual union of Mother Goddess and Horned God. The greatest and most sacred rites of the faith echo this cosmic union, and the most personal form of magic involves the willing sexual joining of priestess and supplicant.

The Covenguard can accept the role of Horned God, symbol of life, strength and virility in these sexual rites. By engaging in a ritual sexual act, requiring at least 6-8 hours, with any Neo-Witch or with any pagan priestess with the Anointed Cleric feat, the Covenguard and the priestess are spiritually bound.

The spiritual bond remains in effect for a year and a day, or until one member of the bond dies. The Covenguard can be bound by the Great Rite to a number of priestesses equal to his CHA modifier (minimum one).

The bond allows the Covenguard and priestess to share personal range spells by touch, exactly as if each were the other's familiar. If one member of the bond is healed (either by mundane, magical or psionic means), the other receives half the healing amount if he or she is within 30 ft.

The Covenguard can sense the distance and relative direction to a ritually bound priestess so long as both he and she are on the same planet and plane of existence. He is instantly aware if a bonded priestess is slain.

Dream of Strength (SU): Each night, the Covenguard's mind wanders the forests and fey courts of the Goddess in dreams, These surreal, precognitive visions strengthen the Covenguard upon awakening. Each morning, upon first awakening the Covenguard may meditate for an hour to focus his mind and body for the challenges he will face that day.

Each day the Covenguard chooses to add his CHA modifier (minimum +1 bonus) as an holy bonus to any of the following types of checks:

- Melee attack rolls made with his cybernetic weapons
- All saving throws
- His Defense Score

Once selected, the bonus cannot be changed until the Covenguard next sleeps.

By touching a priestess he is bonded to with the Great Rite while meditating and activating this power, the Covenguard can share this holy bonus with her. The effect ends for the priestess when the Covenguard sleeps or falls unconscious. The Covenguard can only share the power with a single priestess per day.

Action Enhancement: By spending an action point, the Covenguard can touch any pagan or Choicer creature and provide that creature the benefit of this class feature, as if that person is a bonded priestess. The effect ends for the ally when the Covenguard sleeps or falls unconscious.

Shared Strength (SU): The Covenguard's nanotech bionics are masculine symbols; living weapons to be used in honorable combat in imitation of a warrior god. The Covenguard may share the strength of his cybernetics with a touch. The Covenguard uses Philosophy-based psychokinesis to alter the molecular structure of human flesh and blood, transforming it into cybernetics like his own.

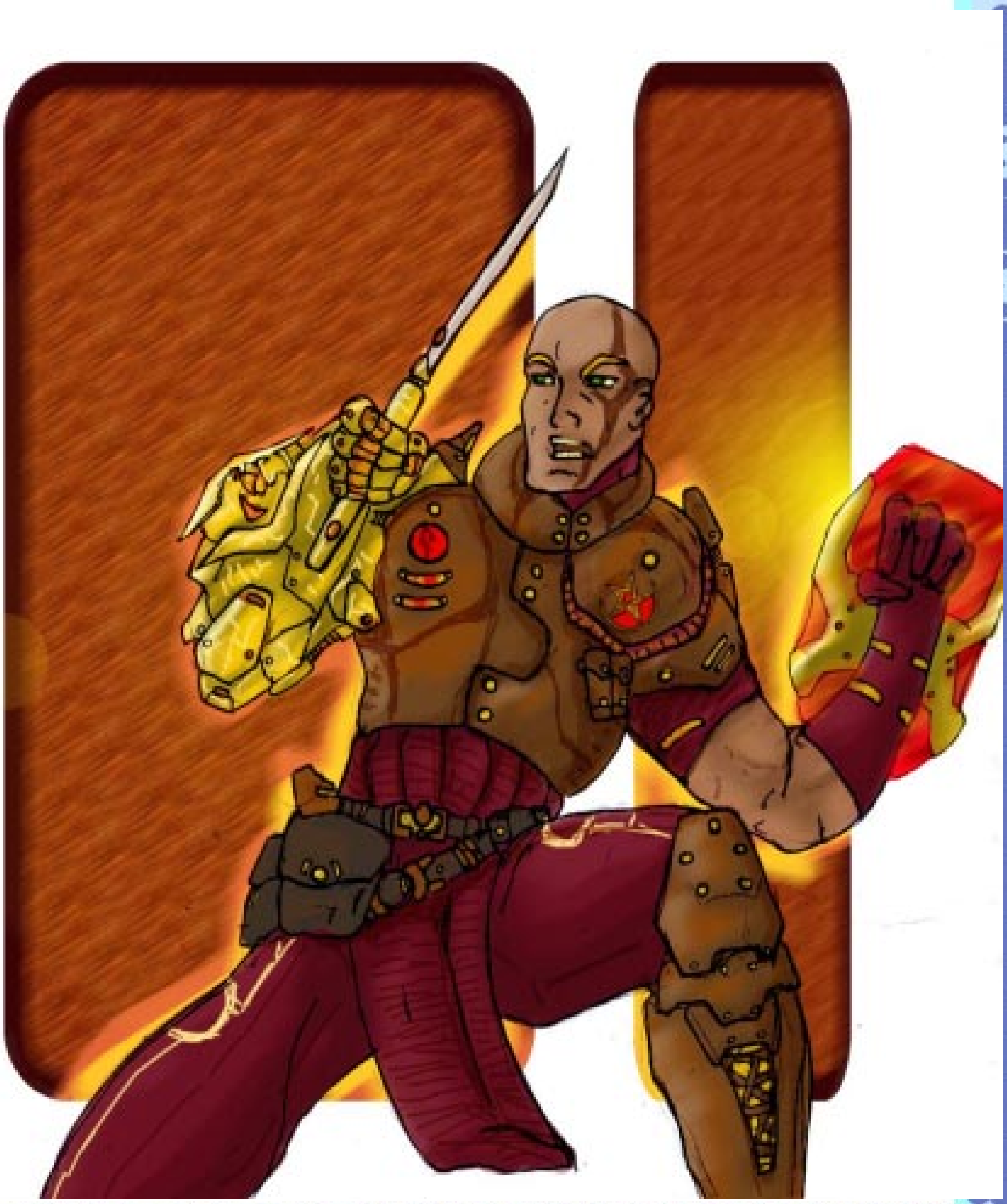
Once per day, an 8th level Covenguard may touch a willing female (of any faith) or any pagan (of either gender) and temporarily grant that person a sample of the cybernetic strength the Covenguard possesses.

The person touched gains the benefit of the Covenguard's Arms & Atheme and Grail Knight's Armory class features, and may use them as if he or she was a member of the Covenguard advanced class. This enhancement lasts for a number of hours equal to the Covenguard's CHA modifier (minimum one hour), and remains in effect for the full duration of the effect, even if the granting Covenguard is knocked unconscious or slain.

Return In Times of Need (EX): At 10th level Covenguard is so utterly committed to serving the Goddess and protecting her faithful that he may return from the grave to complete his divinely sanctioned task.

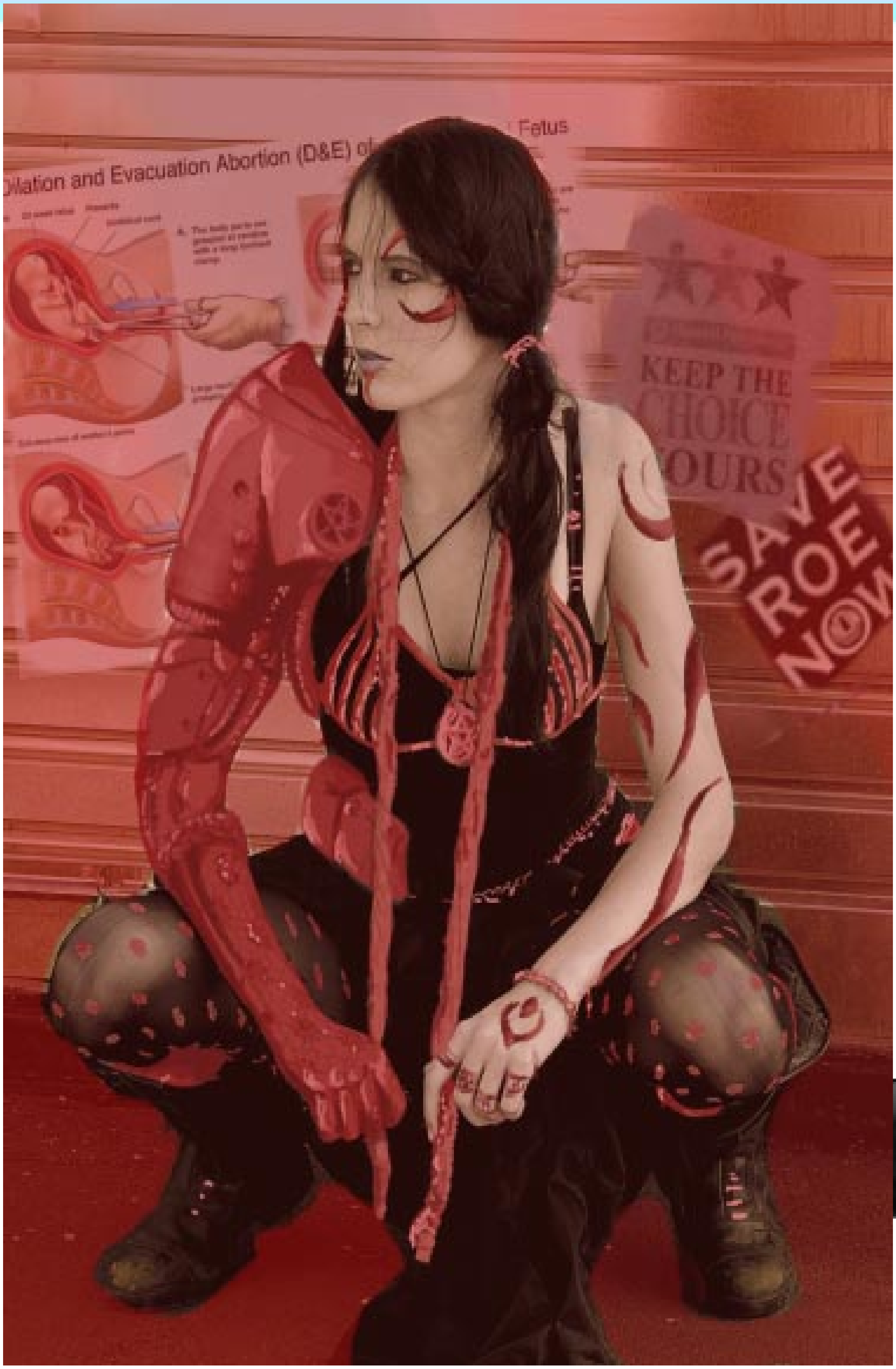
If the Covenguard is slain, he may be returned to life by the simple touch of any Neo-Witch or other pagan cleric, without the need for complex surgery, Philosophies or other techno-miracles.

The Covenguard loses a level upon returning from the dead, exactly as if affected by the *raise dead* spell. The Covenguard may be returned to life at any time up to a year and a day after his demise.



The Neo-Witch Midwife Advanced Class

“Each woman must be free to make her own choice; no man may safely decide for her; she must give life gladly to be able to give it well.”
- C. Gasquoine Hartley, The Truth About Women (1913)


Dilation and Evacuation Abortion (D&E) of
Fetus
KEEP THE CHOICE OURS
SAVE ROE NOW

The Neo-Witch Midwife is the latest link in a spiritual chain reaching back towards the dawn of humanity. She is a modern incarnation of the wise-women, shamans and wiccae who attended women’s needs, attended births and welcomed new offspring into the human community.

Neo-Witch Midwives are the most visible and recognizable symbol of Choicer culture. Neo-Witch Midwives are priestess-medics who embrace the old ways- atheme, chalice, smudge sticks, blood magic- but enhance their bodies and minds with cutting edge nanonics.

Profile of a Neo-Witch Midwife

“My name is Dr. Julie Riddle, and I’m seventeen years old. I received my medical degree three months before my sixteenth birthday. I tend women’s needs, deliver newborns, and even perform abortions when I must.

I chose to have my right arm replaced by an advanced nanotech prosthesis, capable of altering its form into an almost infinite number of useful tools. I have a connection to the Mother that those far wiser than me consider profound, and I’m responsible for the spiritual needs of a *covenhearth with over three hundred young souls, as well as for the advice I give to women older than my own mother."*

-Dr. Julie Riddle; Choice, Red and Raw Mesh-blog, first posted January 17, 2107.

They are teachers and mothers to an entire generation, but even the most pacifistic Neo-Witch Midwife is also a trained soldier. The Treaty of Boston ended the Abortion War, but without a cadre of dedicated professionals working to defend the rights and reproductive freedom of women the peace was essentially meaningless.

With their clinics protected behind military grade force-screens and their tattooed bodies enhanced by subdermal armor and integrated weapons, Neo-Witch Midwives accept the duty of fighting for choice in the abstract, and carrying out abortions when they must. Neo-Witch Midwives can best be thought of as obstetrician / social workers, cybernetically enhanced healers with a uniquely pagan world view.

In addition to their medical responsibilities, Neo-Witch Midwives form the backbone of Choicer society: they are leaders of covens, activists and political leaders. The highest-ranking women in the Covenant are drawn from the ranks of the midwives. The majority of the Woven Circle have served as Midwives, and the Covenant's politicos believe that a leader cannot defend 'choice' as a political ideal, unless she is willing to confront its surgical reality.

The fastest path into the Neo-Witch Midwife Advanced Class is through the Dedicated Hero basic class. A Smart Hero with a few cross skill ranks invested can be just as effective and successful a midwife.

The Neo-Witch Midwife in the Campaign

Julie Riddle closed her eyes, and breathed out slowly, through her nose. She concentrated upon the tool-select menu glowing a calm amber in the darkness behind her eyes. She chose the tools she would need, as her nanonics and onboard doctor-AI chimed their quiet approval in her brain. She could feel the familiar tutorials running somewhere at the back of her consciousness, her cybernetics doing their level best to ensure she'd never lose a patient to human error.

Julie opened her eyes and stretched out her fingers, watching as their substance changed and flowed. Her right arm was a thing of beauty, sleek and polished shapememory plastic, as red and glistening as a virgin's blood. Her intricately jointed fingers splayed and began to transform with a quiet hiss. She lost feeling in her fingers as her fiber-optic nerves rerouted themselves, and her plastic fingers began to elongate. Her forefingers became scalpels, so steady and razor-honed they could slice to within a millimeter's tolerance of perfection. Her middle finger completely changed its purpose, the soft plastic hardening and lengthening, transforming into a stabilizer, to hold the flesh in place as her scalpels did their work. Microscopic cameras opened, like blossoming flowers, on her knuckles and the tips of her last two fingers.

Her senses expanded, cascaded. The view through her eyes became one of a dozen views, and far from the most important. As her nanonics' sensory package woke up, a dozen new sensors came on line. Her sense of smell ramped up into the superhuman range; the patient's pulse and pheromone traces flashed across her consciousness.

Julie was ready to operate. She half-smiled with the easy confidence of one who's done this a hundred times before and sub-vocalized a familiar prayer for healing, and she set to her work….

Neo-Witches of all stripes from the core of the techno-pagan Choicer nation, though the Midwife is one of the most important voices in that emerging country.

The Neo-Witch Midwife has more in common with the 21st century Abortion Provider advanced class than she does with her Neo-Witch sister classes (the Guardian and the Avenger, described in Skortched Urf's D7ACU line). She shares a handful of class abilities, and like the Abortion Provider advanced class, the Neo-Witch is a politically motivated healer and surgeon. Unlike the more practical and secular Abortion Provider, the Neo-Witch Midwife's abilities emphasize a connection to the divine, and a moral acknowledgement of her self-chosen role as birth-priestess.

A 21st century Abortion Provider might be in awe of a Midwife's technical skill and nano-tools, respect her commitment and her level headedness when confronting intolerance, but mock or be baffled by her pagan traditions, odd Philosopical/ magical rituals and cultish superstitions.

The Abortion Provider advanced class is falling out of favor among Choicer activists, as the profession transitions from modern medical practice into something approaching a caste of neo-pagan priestesses who embrace both magic and bionics, and distance themselves farther from mainstream 'monotheist' America with each passing Samhain eve.

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Neo-Witch Midwife, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Craft: pharmaceutical 4 ranks, Knowledge: earth & life sciences 6 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 6 ranks, Treat Injury 8 ranks

Feats: Anointed Cleric, Surgery, Reproductive Care

Gender: Only women are allowed to become Neo-Witch Midwives.

Special: The Neo-Witch Midwife must have declared one of her allegiances towards the Choicer movement, good, towards a humanitarian cause, or follow the tenants of a good aligned pagan faith. The Neo-Witch must be an active member of a Covenant affiliated coven or temple.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Neo-Witch Midwife advanced class.

Hit Die

The Neo-Witch Midwife gains d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Though blessed with health, divine clarity and spiritual purpose, Neo-Witch midwives are only human physically.

Action Points

The Neo-Witch Midwife gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of her character level, rounded down every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Neo-Witch Midwife's class skills are as follows.

Computer Use (INT), Concentration (CON), Craft (chemical, pharmaceutical, writing) (INT), Diplomacy (CHA), Gather Information (CHA), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, business, civics, current events, earth & life sciences, history, streetwise, technology, theology & philosophy) (INT), Listen (WIS), Profession (any medical or clerical) (WIS), Read/Write Language, Research (INT), Sense Motive (CHA), Speak Language, Spot (WIS), Treat Injury (WIS)

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + INT Modifier

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Neo-Witch Midwife may select a bonus feat, which must be chosen from the following list.

Acupuncture, Animal Affinity, Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Medic, Compassionate, Defensive Martial Arts, Diplomat, Diplomatic Immunity, Educated, Evangelist, Flash Mob, Grateful Patients, High Cleric, Instinctive Vigilance, Law Maker, Legislation, Moon Crafter, Moon's Teacher, Parental Demeanor, Personal Coda, Renown, Street Demonstration, Tattooist, Techno-Medicine, Trustworthy, Windfall

The Neo-Witch Midwife may always choose any Choicer feat as a class based bonus feat if she meets the prerequistes.

They may also select the unique Stonecutter martial arts (such as Warlimb) described in *Guide to the Known Galaxy.* Aside from race, a human Midwife must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Neo-Witches learned many combat styles from the shapeshifting Stonecutter species, whose natural abilities closely resemble the capabilities of their bionics.

Obstetrix Nanonics (EX): During her apprenticeship, prior to her final initiation into the ranks of the Neo-Witch Midwives, the neophyte Midwife undergoes partial cybernetic reconstruction. A nanonic infection and integrated micro-tech power-supply are knitted into the flesh of her arm. Over the next few weeks, the priestess's dominant arm and hand is transformed by the nano-infection from human blood and carbon into a sleek shape-memory polymer replacement.

Once the nanonics are on-line and the transformation is complete, the Midwife's dominant arm has been replaced with techno-organic prosthesis the color of blood. The shape shifting bionic limb can transform itself into a nearly limitless variety of useful forms.

The Midwife can will her nano-arm to transform into any handheld, non-powered tool or gadget as a standard action. The nanonics act as a masterwork equipment kit, granting a +2 equipment bonus on any skill that requires a tool kit to perform.

The nanolimb is implanted with a variety of medical and scientific sensory capabilities, from mass spectrometers, x-ray, PET and sonographic imaging and more. The nano-limb can duplicate most sensors found in a modern medical clinic or research lab. The nanosensors in the bionic limb grant the Neo-Witch Midwife the *scent* special quality.

The multi-tool can also transform into a dagger or club; these weapons function identically to their standard counterpart. The Midwife may manifest an atheme at any time, and may use any feats requiring an atheme in conjunction with her cyber arm. The Midwife can also shape her nanonics into a buckler-like shield, which provides a +2 shield bonus to Defense and has no armor check or spell failure chance. However, the midwife cannot also hold a weapon or tool while manifesting a shield.

The Obstetrix Nanonics cannot be disarmed, and if sundered the system shock forces the Obstetrix Nanonics into a regenerative cycle, shutting down the cyber limb for 2d4 hours while undergoing system diagnostics. The nano-limb recovers hit points at the same rate as normal human tissue, and does not count towards the Midwife's total number of implants / does not have a Drain rating.

Special: A multiclass Midwife's cyberlimb is considered a *holy symbol* for purposes of divine abilities, such as turning undead or casting spells requiring a divine focus. Weapons manifested via the nanonics are treated as Holy and Good Aligned weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Moonwise (SU): A first level Neo-Witch Midwife gains the Moonwise feat as a bonus feat. If she already has selected this feat, she receives no additional benefit.

The Neo-Witch Midwife is an especially effective healer during her menstrual cycle. She receives a +1 holy bonus on Treat Injury checks made to treat (mammalian) female creatures (of any age or species) while either she or they are menstruating.

Feminist Medicine (EX): The Neo-Witch Midwife sees herself as the last line of defense for a woman's rights, and a bastion of medical care for needy women. Beginning at 2nd level, the Abortion Provider receives a +2 bonus on all Treat Injury checks made to heal women, and a +2 bonus on all and Knowledge: civics checks made concerning abortion rights, reproductive care or similar laws.

This bonus increases to +3 at 5th level, and +4 at 8th level. Beginning at 8th level, the Midwife also receives this bonus on all Diplomacy checks made

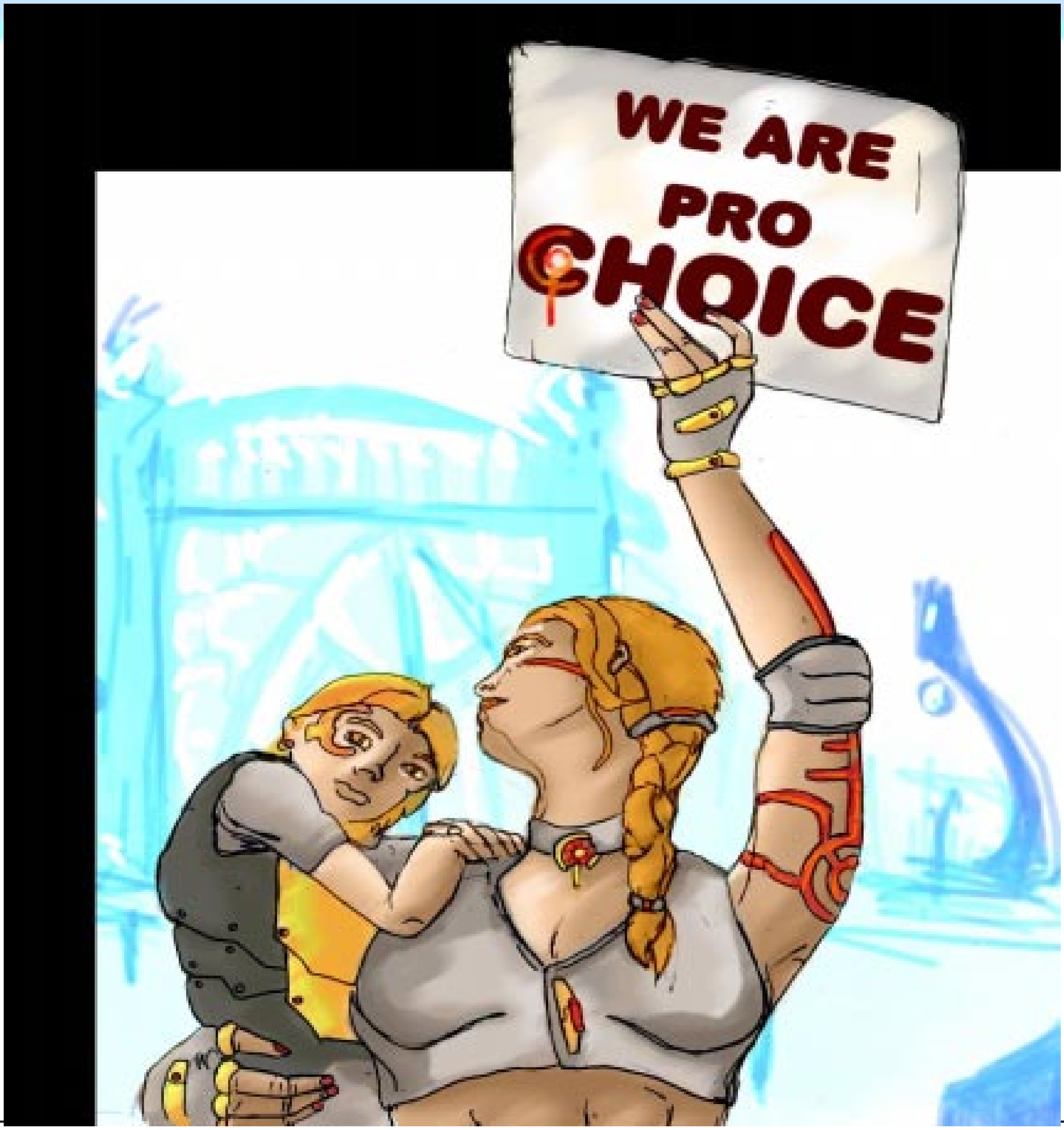


Table: The Neo-Witch Midwife Advanced Class

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+1	+2	Obstetrix Nanonics, Moonwise	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+3	Path of the Goddess, Feminist Medicine	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+2	+2	+3	Pharmocopia Flood, Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+2	+2	+2	+4	Witch's Compaion or Nanonic Evolution	+2	+2
5th	+2	+3	+3	+4	Feminist Medicine II, Pharmocopia Flood II	+3	+2
6th	+3	+3	+3	+5	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+3	+4	+4	+5	Familiar Tasks Skilled Hands	+4	+3
8th	+4	+4	+4	+6	Feminist Medicine III	+4	+3
9th	+4	+4	+4	+6	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+5	+5	+5	+7	Red Breath of Life	+5	+4

concerning abortion law, or made against anyone who shares any of her allegiances.

Action Enhancement: Any time the Neo-Witch Midwife chooses to spend an action point to improve the result of any Treat Injury or Knowledge: civics check, she rolls d8 or multiple d8s, rather than d6s.

Path of the Goddess (SU): At 2nd level, the Neo-Witch Midwife chooses a patron goddess to be loved and served above all others, a divine archetype and inspiration which speaks to what is best in herself. This choice defines the Midwife's beliefs and dreams, as well as solidifying her place within the often factious Covenant Universal.

The Midwife selects one of the following divine archetypes, selecting a patron goddess who embodies one of the archetypes. Once chosen, this selection cannot be changed.

The Midwife loses access to Philosophy-based supernatural abilities for 24 hours if she knowingly breaks the tenants of her faiths or for a year and a day if she knowingly commits a truly evil act.

- *Bloodstained Warrior:* You embrace the path of goddess-as-destroyer, worshiping a violent and terrible protector, a dark mother like Bast, Artemis, Athene or Kali. You receive a +2 insight bonus on Survival checks and a +1 insight bonus on either melee or ranged attack rolls (though not both).

- *Capricious Maiden*: You are the living spirit of the goddess in her young and virginal aspect, embracing both playful sexuality and innocence of lively deities like Kore, Aphrodite, and Aurora. You receive a +2 insight bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks made against anyone who would find you sexually attractive.

- *Healing Mother*: You are the spirit-daughter of a powerful goddess of healing and regeneration, of new life, change and fertility- Rhea, Aphrodite, Freya and many others. You receive a +3 insight bonus on Treat Injury checks. Once per day, you may touch a willing creature and instantly heal it a number of points of damage equal to your WIS modifier plus your Midwife class level (minimum two points). By spending an action point while doing so, you may also *neutralize poison* or *cure disease*.

- *Lady of Beasts*: You worship a goddess of fertility nature, a creatrix – White Buffalo Woman, Lilith or Amertsu, among others. You receive a +2 insight bonus on Handle Animal and Survival checks, and each day may *speak with animals* for a number of minutes equal to your WIS modifier. The duration need not be consecutive.

- *Lady Sage*: You are the spiritual descendant of a somber, wise goddess who inspires artists and philosopher and teaches the world much: Diana, Athene, Sphinx, and Sophia among others. Each day upon rising, you can devote yourself to an hour of sunrise meditations, which provide a +2 bonus to your INT score until you next sleep.

- *Mother of Grains*: Your goddess mother is the spirit of all the earth, and her body begets grain and plenty: Demeter, Asherah, and several American Indian deities among their ranks. You receive a +2 insight bonus on Survival and Profession (farmer) checks. In addition, you receive a +1 insight bonus on all saving throws when in direct physical contact with the natural earth; like the Earth Dance feat, this ability is blocked by shoes, clothing or even a thin layer of floor or concrete.

- *Shadowed Crone:* Your patron goddess conveys souls to death and rebirth, and you know the secrets of the world beyond life, taught to you by goddess like Persephone, Nekhbet and Hel. You receive a +2 insight bonus on Treat Injury and Knowledge: theology & philosophy checks. By touching any sentient creature with an INT score of 5 or greater as it dies, you receive a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls and Treat Injury checks until you next sleep.

- *Wise Crone*: You worship the archetype of the Crone in her aspect as mother of mysticism and secrets: Baba Yaga, Hectate, Xix Tab, among other black goddesses. You receive a +3 insight bonus on Knowledge: arcane lore and theology & philosophy checks. You may cast *prestidigitation* or *mage hand* at will as a first level mage. This ability is Philosophy based.

Pharmacopia Flood (EX): At 3rd level, the nanofactories within the Midwife's Obstretrix limb finally awaken to full function. The Neo-Witch Midwife gains the ability to synthesize drugs, chemicals and even deadly toxins from her own bio-mass.

The priestess gains the ability to synthesize a single dose of any drug or chemical she is familiar with as a full round action. Doing so requires a successful Craft: pharmaceutical check, but no equipment or raw materials other than her onboard nanonics.

The Midwife can easily synthesize any chemical with a Purchase DC of 10 or less. Each additional +1 to the purchase DC requires the Midwife to sacrifice some of her body's vital fluids and trace minerals, inflicting 1 HP worth of damage. Thus if the Midwife wanted to synthesize a chemical with a Purchase DC of 16 she would suffer 6 HP worth of damage in the process.

Each level of restriction, if it applies to the priestess, inflicts 2 additional HP worth of damage. Thus a Midwife mixing a military grade toxin *(Restriction +3 (Military))* inflicts an additional 6 HP worth of damage, since the Midwife must push her nanonics past safety limits and override legal restrictions on the system. A Midwife who is authorized to legally synthesize drugs or toxins does not suffer this additional damage.

By synthesizing deadly chemicals, the midwife can also transform her nano-scalpels and other integrated weapons into toxic bio-weapons.

The priestess can choose to apply a self generated poison to her morphed weapons without risking poisoning herself.

Starting at 5th level, the Neo-Witch Midwife can synthesize any chemical she has ingested or been exposed to (even if she successfully saved against its effects) within the last 24 hours automatically, without requiring a craft check or inflicting HP damage. The Midwife's nanonics simply recycle chemical traces within her blood stream and repackage them.

Witch's Companion (EX): The Neo-Witch Midwife chooses to delve more deeply into the shamanistic, primal side of her heritage. She may either choose to select a familiar as a mage of her total character level, or may select the Witch's Malkin feat, even if she does not meet the prerequistes.

The Midwife explores the mythic bond between familiar and wise woman, and masters new Philosophies based upon this bond. While the familiar is present (or manifested in the case of the Malkin), the Witch receives a +2 insight bonus on all Craft checks.

Nanonic Evolution (EX): The nanonic infection which gives the Midwife her most useful tools spreads slowly and inexorably throughout her body, improving and strengthening her flesh.

At 4th level, the Neo-Witch Midwife gains Endurance as a bonus feat, as a result of her superior metabolism. If she already has this feat, she gains the effects of the feat again; the effects stack, giving her Olympic level strength and endurance.

Alternatively, the priestess may choose to receive a +1 natural armor bonus to Defense, as her body's tissues are strengthened with artificial overlays.

Familiar Tasks, Skilled Hands (EX): A veteran NeoWitch Midwife can allow her nanonics to subsume her conscious mind, moving machine precision and divine inspiration.

A number of times per day equal to one plus her WIS modifier (minimum twice daily), the Midwife can let go her conscious self and allow her living tools to do their work.

When making any Craft, Demolitions, Disable Device, Treat Injury or Repair check, the Midwife can take 20 on the check without increasing the time necessary for the check, effectively declaring that she has rolled a natural 20 on the check.

The Midwife is considered shaken for 1d4 minutes after completing the check, distracted by the emotional closeness and flash of enlightenment she shared with her mother Goddess during the trance state.

Red Breath of Life (EX): The Midwife's nanotech infection has reached her lungs, and she can exhale a cloud of blood-red healing vapors. These nano-particles fill the air around the Midwife, and seek out injuries to heal.

Once per day, the Midwife can exhale a cloud of healing vapors as a free action. The cloud expands to fill a 60 ft radius around the priestess; all creatures within the cloud, both friend and foe are potentially affected, unless they are fully enclosed in CBR-resistant armor.

Each time this ability is used, the Midwife can instantly heal up to 50 HP plus 10 x her WIS modifier worth of injuries. (Thus a priestess with WIS 17 (+3 modifier) could heal up to 80 points of damage). If injured, the Midwife decides if she is the first creature to be healed, or if the healing mist restores other creatures first before affecting her last. She makes this choice the moment she activates this ability.

All creatures within the area of affect are potentially affected; this ability seeks out the closest creatures to heal first, and will heal the most severely wounded creatures first. The healing nano-fog will attempt to restore a creature to full health, expending as many healing particles as necessary, before moving on to heal the next closest injured creature. Dead creatures are not normally affected, though dying creatures are.

The Midwife is considered *fatigued* after using this ability, she is often breathless, and may cough up traces of blood.

Action Enhancement: *By spending an action point when activating this ability, the Midwife can neutralize poison or cure disease on any creature healed by her Red Breath of Life class ability.*

This variant ability can also be used to instantly counter act and neutralize any bio-war agents within the area of effect. The nanotech cloud simply eats away at the chemicals and nullifies them as it heals the sick.

Action Enhancement: *By spending an action point while activating this ability, and breathing directly into the mouth of any creature who has died within the last 8 hours, the priestess can attempt to return that creature to life, as if casting a raise dead spell.*

The nano-load will attempt to heal the raised creature fully; only once the raised creature is returned to 100% HP will the cloud move outward to affect others. If the total amount of healing is not sufficient to return the dead creature to full HP, the creature absorbs the maximum possible healing during its return to life, and the cloud provides no healing to other nearby creatures.

Intangibles: The Choice Not To

Performing abortions is a vital part of their caste's duties, but not the main part, and not every Neo Witch Midwife has 'the preborn's blood on her hands' as their Lifer nemesis believes. The Covenant, even the Bastians, recognize that a person can be pro-choice and still be uncomfortable with abortion.

That said, all serving Neo-Witch Midwives have performed at least one abortion, soon after the implantation of their bionics during puberty. Throughout their pre-teen years, the young medics assisted elder Midwives with that procedure, and other surgeries. Neophyte midwives uncomfortable with performing abortions are taken out of the gyno-midwife educational stream, and if they still have a desire to practice medicine, are simply transferred to a different educational stream. Many other Covenant medical specialties, particularly combat medicine, require the implantation of a nanonic prosthetic limb.

To differentiate between the Midwife caste and other nanonic-enhanced medics, non-midwives usually have differently colored and styled bionic limbs. Choicer combat medics, in particular, have sleek orange and gold limbs. Neo-Witch Midwives who choose to abandon their vocation for moral reasons usually reconfigure their bionics, while Neo-Witch defectors to the Lifer nation often incorporate black and purple components into their cybersystems, if they don't simply remove them completely.

Even if they aren't 'abortion priestesses' themselves, most Neo-Witch medics wear the distinctive red gloves or leather bands of their nation to show solidarity with their abortion providing sisters.

On a somewhat related note, the Shapememory Multitool implant, described in D7 Tech Update: Cybernetics is an less advanced version of a Midwife's bionics. Many surgeons and engineers, Lifers among them, purchase and use these implants. To prevent the possibly fatal consequences of misidentification as an 'abortion-priestess', Shapememory tool users often select a unique appearance (or fully human look) for their bionics.

Famous Choicer Units

Most adult Choicers know someone who died during the War. The Covenant of the Goddess Universal began as a loose confederation of pagan covens, most of whom were pacifists. By necessity, the Choicer nation learned to fight.

The new affiliations described below (and similar affiliations in other Otherverse America releases) detail some of the most famous or most infamous units in history. The heroes or their adversaries might belong to one of these storied units. To claim an affiliation's benefits (and in-game bragging rights), a characters must meet all the prerequisites for the affiliation as well as serve with that unit for at least two months. Affiliations can be a part of a veteran hero's backstory, or can be acquired in game.

Once gained, the character retains the affiliation's benefit for the rest of their days. There's no limit to the number of affiliations a character can gain. Some particularly long-lived Powereds have served with dozens of famed squads, or participated in the battles you only read about in history books over the course of their long careers.

New Affiliation: The Bedchamber Guards

Formation Year: 2044

Motto: "No Harm Shall Befall Our Sleepers"

The Bedchamber Guards were commissioned the same year that the Covenant of the Goddess Universal evolved from a loosely aligned collection of small pagan cults and covens into a national power. The Bedchamber Guards were initially a collection of metahuman and cyber-enhanced volunteers, who were allowed to train at the elite Secret Service Academy.

The neophyte Bedchamber Guards quickly established themselves as a top of the line protective detail.

The Bedchamber Guards are tasked with defending Aradia's Isle, the Woven Circle, their families, and the elected High Priestess of the Covenant with their lives. Bedchamber Guards are extensively trained in both armed and unarmed combat, counter surveillance and urban warfare tactics. The Guards are a small, elite unit guarding a relatively small legislative body. Bedchamber Guards are never far from the Choicer dignitary they are protecting.

Unlike the American Secret Service, the Bedchamber Guards do not split their time between protective detail and anti-counterfeiting ops, allowing them to hone their defensive skills to a razor's edge. The Bedchamber Guards are famous purely for the success of their mission; failure means death, and the Guards almost never fail.

Affiliation Prerequisites: At least one level of either the Bodyguard or Covenguard advanced classes. Spot 12 Ranks, Alertness, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Precise Shot

Affiliation Benefits: Bedchamber Guards are incredibly precise shots. When firing into melee where an ally or protected VIP is involved, the Bedchamber Guard rolls two d20s and takes the more favorable result. This ability has no bearing when firing into melee if an ally or VIP is not involved.

New Affiliation: Big Cat Gun
Official Designation: 401st Heavy Expeditionary Force
Formation Year: 2068
Disbanded: 2089
Motto: "First in the Fight"

Big Cat Gun earned its place in the history books with its sacrifice during the Fall of Pensacola. Long a capital city for the American Lifer Nation, Pensacola was only captured by Choicer forces after a brutal, four month siege. Big Cat Gun's sacrifice was instrumental in liberating the city. Cut off from Choicer support within the first days of the battle, Big Cat Gun operated deep behind enemy lines, harassing Lifer forces and occupying their attention until Choicer forces could finally retake the city.

However, Big Cat Gun's hard fought victory also marked the unit's demise. Of the 525 men and women who entered Pensacola, fewer than 30 survived the engagement. The heavy weapons squad was disbanded after the battle, its colors retired with honor by the Choicer high command. Big Cat Gun's heroic final stand has been memorialized in fiction and pop culture, though the mostly Bastian unit remains controversial on both sides.

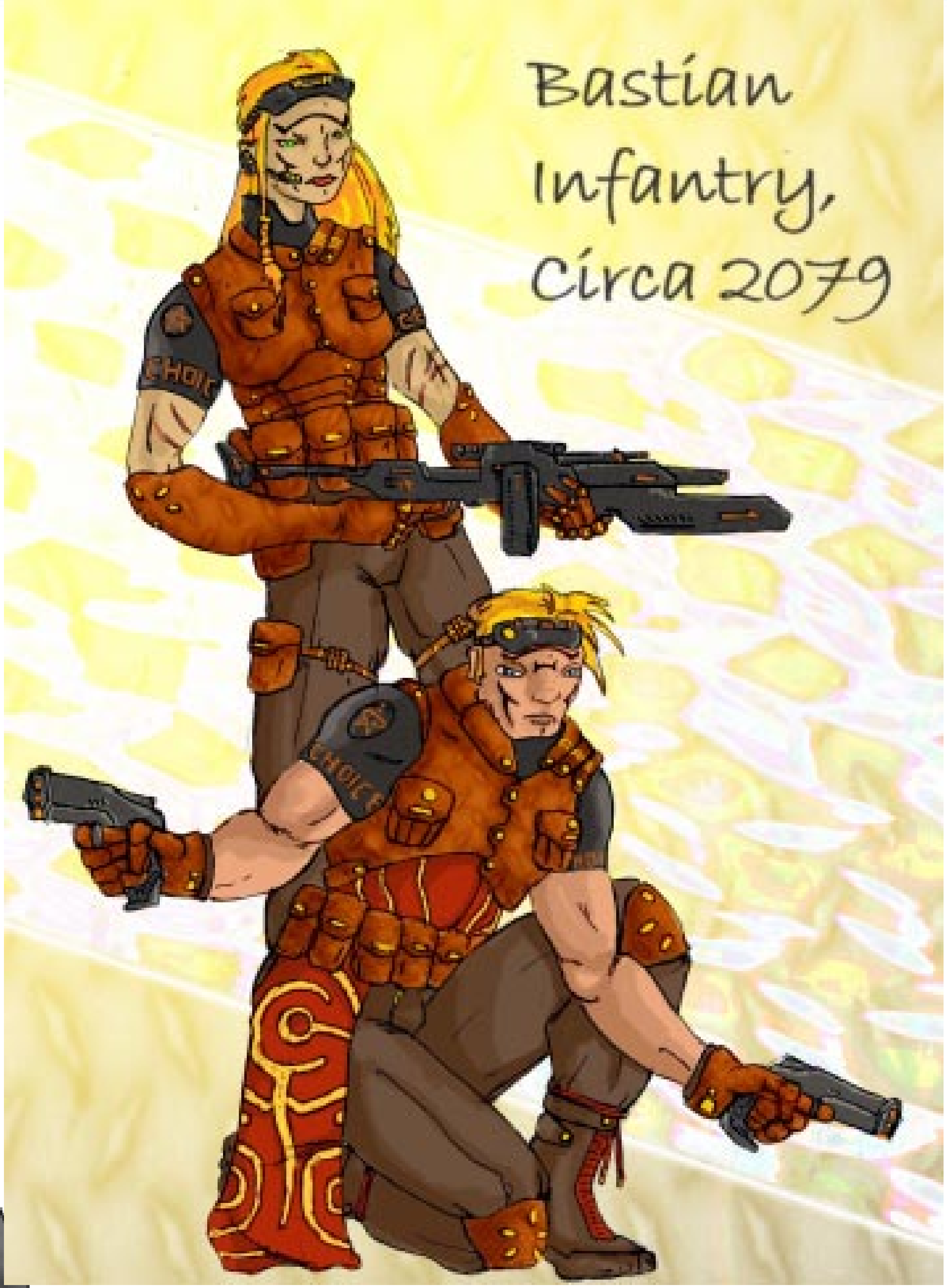
Moderate Choicer groups dislike the fact the unit's sacrifice has become a rallying cry for Choicer hardliners, while Lifers dislike the unit for its brutality and what they call the 'terrorist tactics' the besieged unit resorted to during the battle of Pensacola.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Endurance, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Knowledge: tactics 4 rank

Affiliation Benefits: The few survivors of Big Cat Gun are incredibly tough, battle-hardened veterans. These scarred warriors receive a +1 competence bonus on Intimidate checks and Initiative checks made in urban environments.

New Affiliation: Black Witchcraft
Official Designation: 3rd Precision Targeted Advanced Artillery Battalion
Formation Year: 2062
Motto: "Shoot Smarter"

Black Witchcraft is effectively a sniper unit-one which uses precision-guided bombs, over the horizon rail gun strikes and sat-launched particle beams instead of conventional sniper's tools. Black Witchcraft is one of the oldest and most decorated Choicer units, and have played a decisive role in virtually every major engagement of the War. Black Witchcraft is called upon to do the impossible-eliminate dug in, heavily fortified targets in a crowded urban theater with minimal civilian causalities. It's a task the men and women of Black Witchcraft excel at.



APEX combat-type metahumans regularly train with Black Witchcraft, and the unit is internationally regarded as some of the best urban warfare specialists on the planet. During the War, Lifer irregulars assassinated several of these advanced weapons specialists; many members of the unit had high dollar bounties on their heads.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Far Shot, Demolitions 4 ranks

Affiliation Benefits: Black Witchcraft's unit philosophy minimizes civilian losses while maximizing damage to chosen targets. When firing, launching or throwing an area effect weapon (such as a missile or grenade), the solider can choose to do either of the following:

- Reduce the total blast radius by 5 ft (to a minimum of a 5 ft square blast radius)
- Increase the REF Save DC associated with the weapon by +1

Using this unique ability is considered part of the attack action.

New Affiliation: "Choice Squad Four"
Official Designation: Independent Counterinsurgency Squad Four
Formation Year: 2066
Motto: "Within Her, Victory"

"Explosions rocked Below-Decks Romeo and Sierra today, venting more than 150,000 liters of air and destroying several homes, businesses and station facilities. Thirty two people are confirmed dead, and more than fifty are missing and presumed dead, while injuries are in the hundreds. Station militia, in conjunction with the Disaster Investigation arm of station emergency services, have determined the hull breach was caused by sabotage, rather than accident. The pro-abortion terrorist "Choice" is believed to be responsible for this tragedy….."

-Solomon Station Daily Clarion, on-mesh edition, April 27, 2106.

"I've found helmet cam footage of my sister's execution on the black market. She was an attractive woman, a priestess midwife sworn

to Isis-Astarte, and because of that her execution tape commanded a premium- almost 1,500 dollars, cash because the seller didn't trust ID-Wallet transactions. The death tape wasn't exceptionally bloody, and by ***their*** *standards, surprisingly humane. If it had been longer, or crueler, at least one more zero would have been added to the price.* ***They*** *like to watch Choicer women die, you see.*

A Lifer infantry woman put my sister on her knees, placed the barrel of a Rhea 5.6 against the back of her skull, and said the usual words.

"I am giving you the choice between life and death, between heaven and hell, between God's blessing and His curse. Choose life."

Had my sister broken her oath, she would have probably lived. ***They*** *were waging a PR campaign that year, and swordpoint conversions were better PR. My sister didn't say anything, at least nothing audible on the recording. A second later the Lifer fired. My sister died instantly, lords and ladies.*

And that is all the reason I will ever need to kill ***them****."*

-Testimony of imprisoned Bastian operative Barbane Merideth, warname "Choice", during pre-sentencing psychological examination. May, 2106.

During the War, Choice Squad Four operated with minimal support or oversight from the Choicer high command, and earned a reputation as one of the most effective anti-terror units in the Choicer arsenal. Composed entirely of genetically enhanced, veteran intelligence agents and urban combat experts, Choice Squad Four operated almost exclusively as a Powered strike team. Turning the unit's lack of resources into an advantage, Choice Squad Four became a highly mobile, highly lethal roving anti-Lifer squad.

Choice Squad Four carried out an extensive catalogue of recon missions, deep into Lifer controlled territory, assassinations (particularly of hard to kill Lifer metahumans) and anti-terror ops. Choice Squad Four became infamous on both sides for its willingness to use dangerous, mind-crushing psi probes and state of the art torture techniques on captured Lifers. Today, Choice Squad Four is still active, and its mission is mostly unchanged – protect the Choicer nation by assessing Lifer capabilities and intentions- though the units tactics have been restricted by the Treaty of Boston.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Knowledge: tactics 4 ranks, Knowledge: streetwise 4 ranks, Intimidate 4 ranks

Affiliation Benefits: Choice Squad Four operatives are urban warfare experts. They receive a +2 competence bonus on Hide checks made in urban terrain, and receive a +1 competence bonus on ranged attack rolls made within 30 ft, which stacks with the bonus from the Point Blank Shot feat.

New Affiliation: Holy Grail
Official Designation: 15th Medical and Genetic Support Unit
Formation Year: 2061
Motto: "Spill No Blood"

Holy Grail was one of the first units formed in the newly commissioned Choicer military. A small squad of neo-witch trained medics, midwife-priestesses and EMTs, all equipped with top of the line medical-grade nanonics, Holy Grail was founded to keep wounded Choicer soldiers and their allies alive. The unit was also formed to provide neo-pagan soldiers in the US military access to treatment in accordance with their own beliefs and to integrate the high tech nano-medicine of the neo-witch faith with conventional military medicine.

Holy Grail earned a reputation as one of the best run, most efficent field hospital units in the Choicer nation, as well as for unwavering compassion, even towads captured Lifer troops. Today, Holy Grail has evolved into the premier military-medical unit in the Choicer nation; its responsibilities include everything from breeding new meta-soliders to administering veterans affairs.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Surgery, Medical Expert

Affiliation Benefits: You receive a +2 competence bonus on Treat Injury checks when providing medical care to anyone with any Choicer allegiance, a similar allegiance, or any neo-pagan. You receive a +1 competence bonus on Diplomacy checks made against anyone with a Lifer or similar allegiance, if that person is aware of your unit affiliation.

New Affiliation: "Momma Athene"
Official Designation: C.S.S. Athena of the Shadows

San Francisco Class, Fusion Drive Special Operations Submarine (SSF-012)
Commissioning: 2073

Athena of the Shadows is the centerpiece of the small, but highly capable Choicer Navy, a unique naval vessel designed as a test bed for promising new doctrines in 22nd century submarine and spec ops warfare. The Athena was commissioned by Captain Shaye Renoza, who like several of the most committed Choicer leaders of the era, adopted the war-name Choice.

Though Captain Renoza was (at least notionally) a United States Navy officer, she was allowed to command the Athena in accordance with Choicer tactical doctrines and ceremony; the *Athena* was officially removed from the USN inventory and transferred into Choicer command in 2092. The *Athena* has always been a purely female ship, based on research indicating that women adapt better to the both psychological and physiological pressures of submarine duty.

The *Athena's* service during the War was limited but vital to the cause. The sleek submarine is capable of littoral (river-based) warfare, and was often used to deploy SEAL and Choicer spec-ops units, as well as conducting operations in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River regions. The vessel's secondary role was interdiction- preventing Lifer forces from moving men or machines by sea.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Female gender only. Surface Vehicle Operation (ship)

Affiliation Benefits: The Athena's crew are heavily drilled in both naval tactics and the rites of grey-eyed Athena. Crew members receive a +1 insight bonus on Navigate checks, as well as Knowledge: tactics and Knowledge: theology & philosophy checks.

New Affiliation: Squad Deborah
Official Designation: 11th Shell Infantry
Formation Year: 2069
Motto: "Fly True, Run Fast, Sting Hard"

A tour of duty with the elite Squad Deborah has become a nearly part of Choicer political advancement. Several Choicer Senators and Presidential hopefuls served with Deborah, and the Choicer air command is made up almost exclusively of Deborah veterans. Squad Deborah epitomizes the Choicer aviation philosophy – control the skies through overwhelming numbers of small, highly maneuverable Shell suits instead of conventional aircraft.

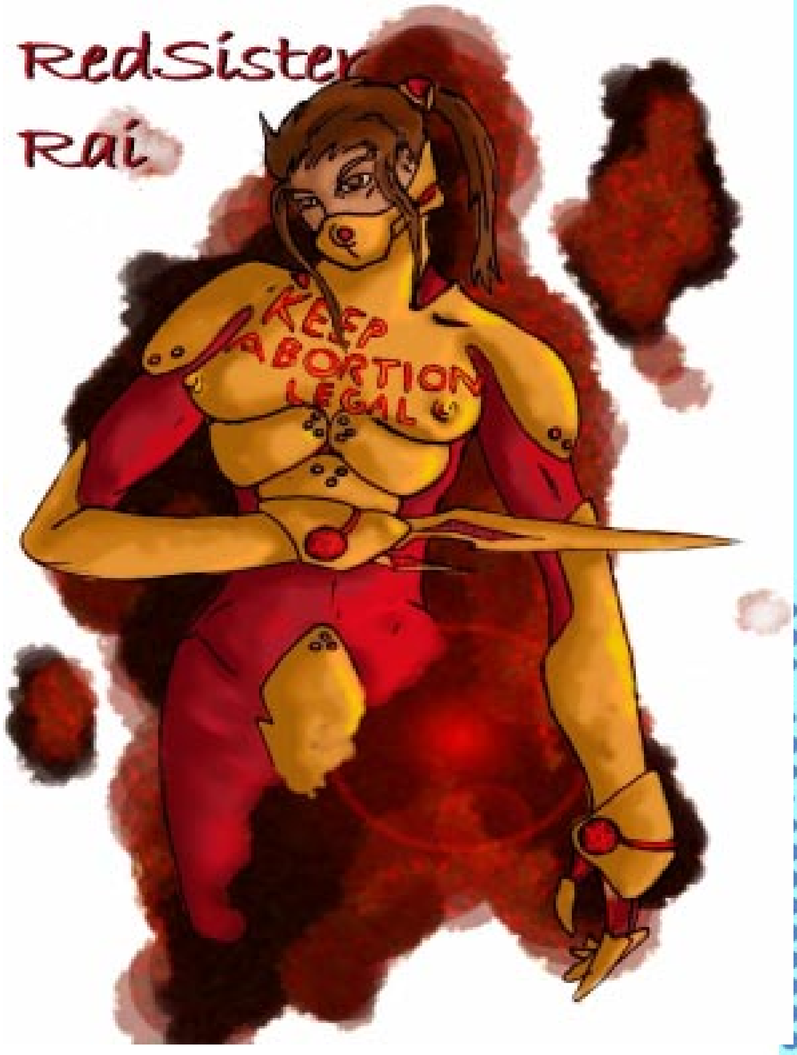
Some of the best pilots in Choicer history have served with Deborah, and their experiences in the unit have only reinforced the Shell-dominant concept of the Choicer military. Squad Deborah's tactics emphasize speed, mobility and the intelligent use of terrain and cover, and relishes the ability of Shell suits to act as either close air support or mechanized infantry. Only the best Shell pilots qualify for a tour of duty with "Debbie", but for those that do, the rewards are many.

Affiliation Prerequistes: *Armored Survivor*, Endurance, Run, *Techno-knight,* Knowledge: Tactics 4 ranks, Pilot 8 ranks

Affiliation Benefits: Your service in Squad Deborah has made you an excellent Shell pilot and given you top-notch political connections. You receive a +1 competence bonus on Jump, Pilot and Repair checks, as well as a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made against Choicer military figures who are aware of your service in Squad Deborah.

New Affiliation: Vixen Six
Official Designation: 6th Light Recon Calvary (Urban Insertion)
Formation Year: 2067
Motto: “We Own These Streets!”

> *“All Kirkegard Protective drivers are trained to the highest professional standard. Most have multiple tours of duty with ‘Vixen Six’, and all have completed the Secret Service’s Combat Driving course. We put only the best behind the wheel.”*
>
> *-Kirkegard Protective Services client introduction e-phamplet, circa 2106*



Vixen Six veterans are some of the best urban war-drivers on the planet. Initial command of the unit was granted to CWO2 Thomas Chohile in late 2067, Vixen Six was initially conceived as a rapid response and scouting unit. Incorporating high speed/low mass hover cycles, conventional ground cycles and light Shell suits, Vixen Six’s mandate was simple- to detect and eliminate threats to Choicer convoys and vehicles.

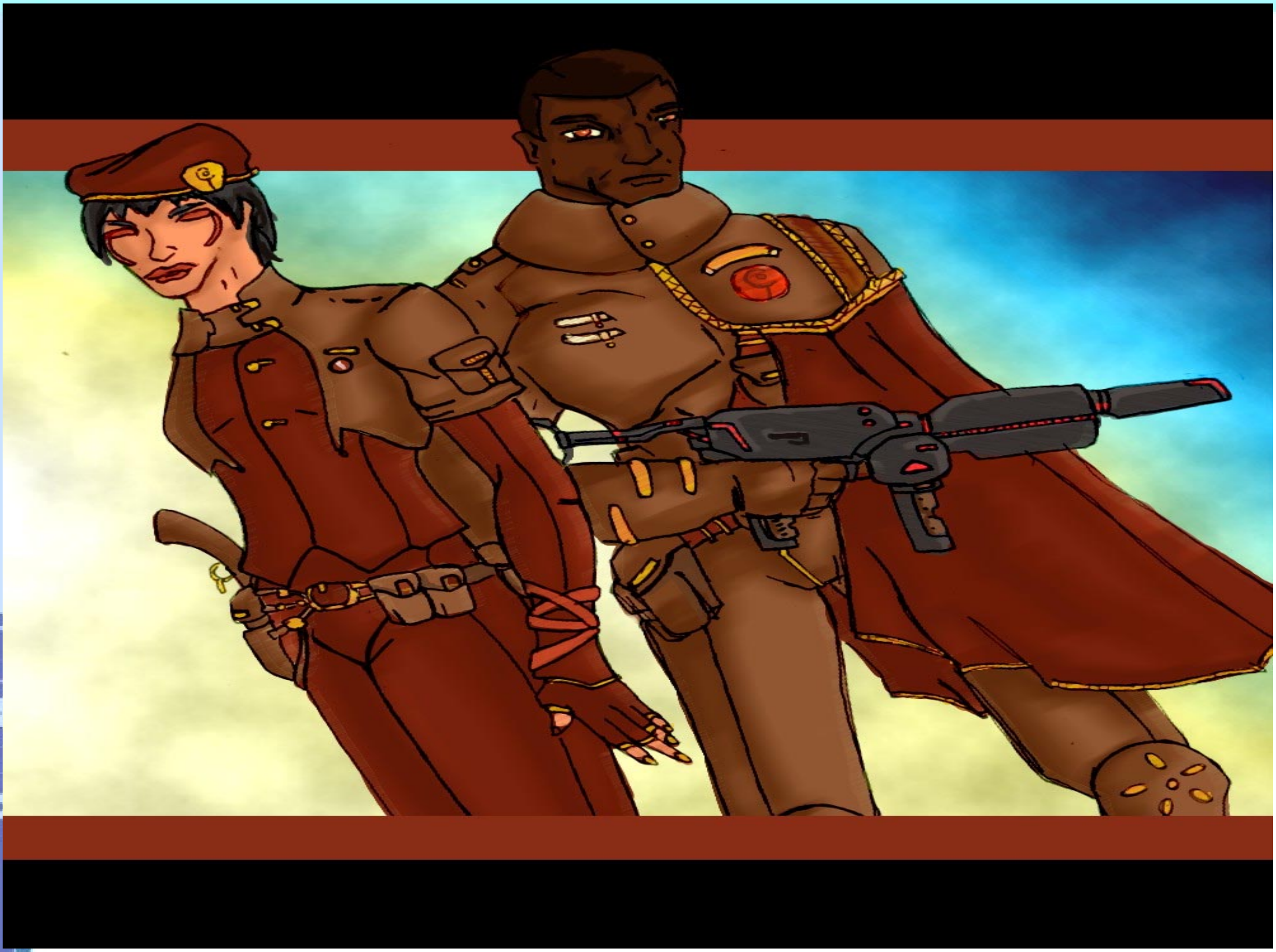
Chohile, himself an Iraqi war veteran, proved equally adept at spotting and countering ambushes, roadside bombs and metahuman terror strikes. Over time Six’s mission parameters expanded from convoy escort to VIP transport. Today, the most important Choicer political figures are couriered by highly decorated ‘Six’ drivers.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Drive 4 ranks, Vehicle Expert

Affiliation Benefits: Your Vixen Six training grants you a +2 bonus on Drive checks made when traveling at chase speed or greater, and a +2 bonus on Spot checks made when driving or piloting any ground vehicle or suit of power armor.

Unaligned America

Otherverse America is defined by the often-lethal conflict between conservative Christians and liberal pagans, with intentionally sparse mention given to the Americans who don’t fit into that paradigm. An upcoming sourcebook will detail the culture, economy and military of ‘unaligned America’, explore the APEX organization in depth, and elaborate on the role the non-Christian, non-pagan faiths (Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and others) play in the conflict. This material was cut from the core sourcebook mostly to bring down the page count to a manageable size, and because the info on the third great American faction is big and complex enough to stand on its own.



October 9, 2107.
Colorado Federal Penitentiary Level IV.

At the designated time, the guards opened a 15 second window in the energy umbra surrounding the supermax, and Joe Mortari teleported down into the prison. He opened his eyes as the matter-fax ended, his skin still tingling a little from the brief jaunt through unreality. He had appeared directly atop the receiving beacon painted on the floor with nanite-infused latex. Best guess, he was more than three miles below ground. As he was told to, he arrived with his hands raised and his own metahuman forcefields lowered. He kept his hands raised as the guards scanned the ID-Wallet implanted in his right thumb and checked it against the national DNA registry.

Finally, Joe was allowed to lower his hands. Because he was (at least nominally) a Choicer combat volunteer, he was allowed to keep his Kevlar II spidersilk body armor and the combat weight atheme he carried in his utility belt, though he was told (politely) that if he manifested any of his post-human talents or drew the blade, the guards would respond with lethal force. Wondering what he had gotten himself into by agreeing to this meet, the young blond man agreed, trying to sound sure of himself.

Two guards in full riot armor accompanied the young Powered through the bowels of the prison. He passed through a dozen obvious security checkpoints, and assumed that he'd probably passed through twice that many covert security zones. Everything here was cold and grey, lit only by the blue light of mac-tik force fields. He knew that prison's force field tech was identical to the energized domes that protected *the covenheaths and clinics in his own neighborhood, but Joe was astounded at how different the light seemed in here. The blue umbra surrounding his neighborhood…. It always reminded him of home, of better days. Here, the blue light was cold and sterile and somehow threatening.*

Finally, the procession came to their destination, a secured visitation cell deep within the living rock of the mountains. The door slid open with a faint squeak of unlubircated metal, and the trio entered. Immediately, the two riot-armored guards took up positions beside the door, while Joe Mortari walked straight ahead.

The small room was separated by a curtain of glistening blue light. On the far side of this curtain, the woman who requested the audience waited patiently. She was dressed only in an orange pseudo-cotton jumpsuit, made of fabric too weak to construct a noose or a garrote out of. There was nothing in the room with her, not even a chair. She just stood, waiting, hands at her side in a ready stance.

Even before he looked at her ruined face, at the livid red scar tissue running over the bridge of her nose and down the left side of her throat and chest, Joe shuddered slightly. She radiated menace; Joe knew enough martial arts to realize that she could probably break his spine with one good kick. And he knew what she'd done on Solomon, almost restarting this goddessdamned War….

"What do you want, Choice?"

She sneers with half a face. She folds her hands behind her, at parade rest, and stares up at the taller man through the force field wall. "To congratulate you and your covenmates, first off. Excellent work on Lesbos, Joseph."

Joey rubs his forehead, blinks two or three times in confusion and settles into a metal chair bolted onto his side of the deckplates. "Why? We're the ones who-"

"-put me in here? I know that, Joseph, but I'm still Choicer, whether they like it or not. Whether you like it or not, as a matter of fact. ***Their*** *attacks on our beanstalks have only become more intense, and I'm glad you and yours were able to teach them some respect. They only learn through pain. They're like old Pavlov's dogs in that respect."*

Joe's scarred mouth twitched in a sneer. He didn't like the Lifers much either, but the coldness in her voice when she spoke of them, like they were less than human, rankled something deep inside him. He ran his hands nervously through his long, samuari's hair.

"It makes you uncomfortable. You've been fighting them for the last nine months, and speaking frankly still makes you nervous."

She snorts, and her sociopathic grey eyes soften a little, like a school teacher explaining a difficult problem. When she snorts her half laugh, her breath whistles through her damaged nostrils. "Bast ***will*** *teach you much, Joseph. She's already taught you how to hunt, and you've learned well. I'm proof of that."*

She spreads her arms, expansively, indicating the empty chamber and the blue light wall. Joe stands up, half turning away from her, trying to figure out why he doesn't just key in his comms and teleport back out of this steel and hardlight pit. "Look, if you have something to say, just go ahead and say it. Goddess, I don't even know why I bothered to come here…."

"I have a gift for you. And for your….covenmates."

He raises an eyebrow, not sure if he heard her correctly, "What makes you think any of us want anything from you? I'm sorry, but you're a complete fucking bitch."

She laughs once, without the joy touching her grey eyes. "And the last time you saw me, you broke sixteen of my bones, but you're still here aren't you? Even if only out of curiosity. I still have contacts among the Sisters of Bast, Joseph. Even here, I can still contact them. There *are Philosophies I've learned…. A cage is only a cage as long as you let it contain you."*

"This one doesn't contain you?"

"Did you think it would? I was interned at Kissimmee St. Cloud during the War. You've read history. If that place couldn't hold me, why would this one? No, I've already spoken to several of my sisters. We have agreed to allow you and your group access to the Covenant's intelligence archives."

His eyes go wide, and he tries and fails to hide his shock. It takes him a second to respond. "We've been trying to get IA access for the last six months. Even with all Cassie's clearances, the Woven Circle's been ignoring us."

"Your coven of war will have full access by dawn tomorrow, with the same access privileges as any junior member of the Circle."

He sits down again, hard, trying to figure this out and failing badly. He's smart and perceptive enough to realize he's just stumbled into some kind of trap, but unsure of what it exactly is. He croaks out the obvious question.

"Because you need this access to do your job, Joseph. And because I've already seen how effective your group is. I would prefer to have you work with my sisters than against them. Even your pet Lifer."

*Joey snarls at this. His eyes narrow, and for a moment, he considers ramping up his own energy fields and finishing the job he started on Solomon last year. She laughs again, with more honesty this time, "And because I know that your group is primarily Choicer, and while you may occasionally turn your attention to truly committed women like myself, you will spend the vast majority of your days battling **them**. And anything that harms their kind is an advantage. "*

"And it goes without saying that your coven is a fine distraction. You embarrass some of the older, established voices within the Covenant. I like that. Anything that forces them to consider, or reconsider, my words, my beliefs, I like."

Without saying another word, he turns to leave, shaking his head.

"I don't expect thanks, you know. But there is one thing you can do for me. If you choose, of course. Choice is the prerogative of all, Joseph."

He pauses at the threshold, face pressed against the cool ballistic steel of the bulkhead in an effort to try and get rid of the tension head ache that's settled behind his eyes. "Which would be what, Choice? Want me to drown some Lifer babies in a bucket? Kick Fairfax Dacoveney's puppy? Blow up another Lifer-flagged space station or what?"

Her smile is faint and sardonic, and implies that she has no problem with any of those suggestions, even if they were presented in jest. "Nothing so strenuous. I understand you haven't decided on a Warname yet."

"Not sure if I'll actually be using one or not. I don't think my brother will be, and not sure if I will either."

*"I understand, but may I make a suggestion? Joseph, before this country, this oh so great Christian America we are **all** imprisoned by-"*

"Cage is only a cage if it imprisons you, Choice."

"Well, Joseph, this particular cage binds me, and you as well, even if you haven't beat your head against the bars quite yet. This America, before it was a century old, it had slaughtered this continents indigenous pagan population, and worse, it had brought the old hatreds- the Burning Times- across the sea from Europe. Before this country had even became a true nation, it had slaughtered hundreds of women. At Salem."

His eyes go wide again. His heart pounds *in his chest, and his right hand traces the white ceramic hilt of his atheme. He licks his scarred lips, his pulse racing, suddenly aware of every drop of blood running through his veins. "Are you asking me to…. Goddess, "Salem" its one of the…..I…. I don't have the chops to…."*

"Joseph, you fly. You can alter the molecular structure of objects with a touch. You can manifest by will power alone an energy that lesser humans require million-dollar technology to produce. You have abilities that would have been called miracles in an earlier century, and you are pagan. You are a ***believer****. In every way that matters you are a witch. A true and magnificent witch.*

There has been a Salem in combat alongside our sisters since the foundation of the Covenant. We take that name to remind the monotheists of their crimes, and to remind them that, yes, there ***is*** *a reason to fear witches."*

Joe Mortari says nothing. He looks down at his gloved hands, wrapped in green and white spider-silk, and remembers how it felt to disintegrate the reactive armor of a Lifer "Baby Judgment" combat suit. He remembers the burnt metal stench in the air, as the dense purple plating transformed to carbon flakes and blew away like ash….

"The sisters and I agree. You are worthy of the name Salem. If you choose to register that warname, none within the sisterhood will object."

He nods curtly, not quite sure what he's agreeing to. Does the nod say he'll consider it, or does the nod say that the deal is done? He looks up to the sky, unconsciously, like he always does when he's about to key in his teleport beacon and request transport. He touches the teleport key implanted under his right wrist, and begins to fade from reality. Orange and white fire dances over his body, dematerializing and digitizing him, and as Joe Mortari vanishes, again he thinks of how good it felt to disintegrate that Lifer shell, and how much his hands tingled.

She gets the last word, just before his sensory capabilities vanish into the teleport stream.

"Blessed be, Joseph…..Salem."

Favorite Choicer Weapons and War Machines

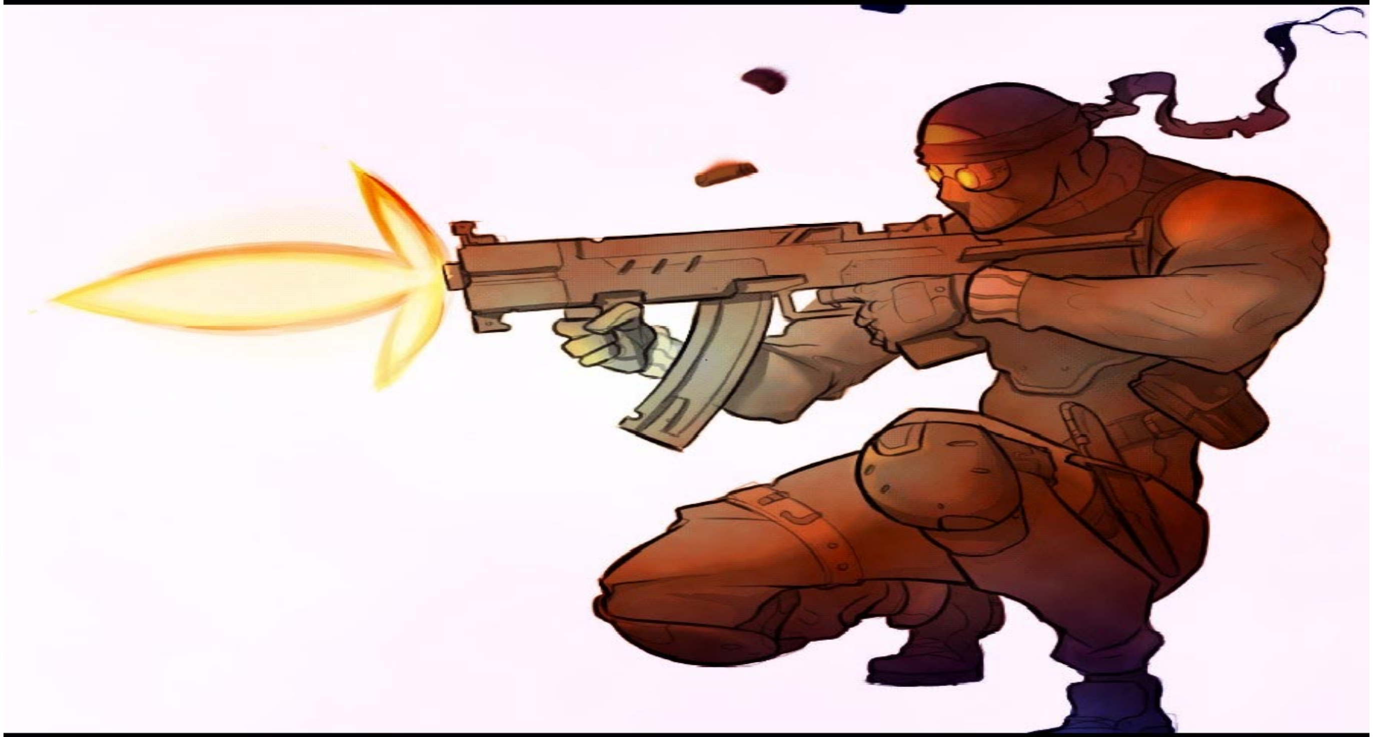
The Choicers have a proud military tradition. Their arms industry is second to none; Choicer military surplus is exported to eager buyers across the planet. Even Lifer kill-squads occasionally use Choicer war-tech, mostly weapons stolen as a war trophy. Politics aside, the Choicers know how to build a gun.

Intangibles: The Appleseed

The stylized appleseed which appears on Choicer combat boots and knee protectors is a modern, militarized take on an old pagan motif. In pagan thought, apples are a highly symbolic and magical fruit. An apple, split in half, reveals a simple pentagram at its core. The fruit's unique seed pattern is an example of the natural world reflecting and illustrating a spiritual truth. Appleseed styled combat wear is just one example of how the Choicer's beliefs influence their army's equipment choices.

Campanelli Multi-Purpose Plasma Rifle: The Campanelli has been in use since the mid 2060s, and is a weapon known for lethality and reliability. This long-barreled energy weapon has been the primary infantry weapon of Choicer soldiers for decades. This weapon can be fired as a fully automatic assault rifle, or with the selector switch set for single-shot, as a passably accurate sniper rifle. Campanelli MPs are commonly traded, and are in wide use by most of the world's militaries. Lifer troops are just as likely to use these highly reliable guns as their Choicer enemies.

The Campanelli is instantly recognizable thanks its unique, ergonomic folding stock, and for the long, heat resistant cowling covering the weapon's barrel. The weapon is designed to be fired at full-auto by conventional troops, not just Power Armor pilots; the bulky cowling is necessary to prevent burns from the energy weapon's heat discharge.



Conscience Bomb: The Conscience Bomb is a non-lethal, anti-personnel weapon system designed for urban pacification and crowd control. One of the most technologically advanced weapons in the Choicer arsenal, the Conscience Bomb uses machine-telepathy and memetic viruses to rewrite a target's beliefs and core personality.

When a Conscience Bomb detonates, a storm of psionic energy and electromagnetic neural viruses erupts. The bomb's detonation itself is harmless, a startling lightshow similar to a *flashbang* grenade.

All sentient creatures within a 30 ft radius of the blast point must succeed at a WILL Save (the DC of which determines the weapon's price) or find some of their allegiances temporarily removed. Choicer built Conscience Bombs were specifically tailored to delete allegiances to the Lifer A.O.G, the pro-life movement as a whole and conservative religious causes. A conscience bomb is programmed with up to 4 allegiances when it is armed, which are clearly marked on a miniature plasma display on the side of the cylindrical grenade.

If the target fails his or her WILL Save, those allegiances are deleted for the next 1d4 days. Note that no allegiances replace the lost causes, often leaving the victim of the bomb confused and existentially shaken. If the target has no declared allegiances as a result of the bomb-blast, he or she is *shaken* for the duration of the effect. Once the effect ends, the stricken character's true allegiances begin returning, with the victim's true personality reasserting itself within a few hours.

The gamemaster determines how a target acts if his or her core allegiance is removed. A Lifer squad which stumbles across a Conscience Bomb during a raging fire-fight will probably continue to fight, even if they no longer have a purely political or religious reason to do so. Even shorn of political motivations, Lifer soldiers might still fight, due to an un-erased allegiance towards their squad mates or out of fear of capture or death. However, since they are (at least temporarily) no longer morally opposed to their Choicer adversaries, they might be more likely to consider retreat, or accept a surrender or ceasefire.

The temporary loss of allegiances may result in the loss of access to certain class features, particularly if the character is a member of a class with supernatural or divine talents, as well as the loss of any politically-aligned object philosophies.

The Conscience Bomb is a small cylinder the size of a soda can. It can be thrown like a grenade, as well as placed as an improvised mine. Once set, the Conscience Bomb will detonate if any Medium sized or larger creature or object comes within 5 ft.

To the Lifers, the Conscience Bomb is not a merciful alternative to lethal force; it is a soul deep invasion, a psionic rape. The Treaty of Boston has outlawed this psi-weapon as well as many other forms of tactical brain-washing. At least officially, the Choicer nation no longer produces this weapon. However, several thousand boxes of C-Bombs were "lost" en route to recycling facilities. Choicer special operations groups, among others, still find uses for this out-of-favor weapon.

Farrar 5.7mm SMG: The Farrar is a sleek, bullpup model submachine gun, a 21st Century replacement for the revolutionary but aging FNP-90. The Farrar is an ultra light submachine gun, designed for comfortable one handed use either left or right-handed shooters. It is composed exclusively of non-metallic compounds, with the majority of the casing composed of vat-grown cellulose.

The light and comfortable Farrrar is always considered a masterwork weapon, providing a +1 equipment bonus on ranged attack rolls. The Farrar mounts a single shot grenade launcher under the main barrel. This miniature launcher holds a single micro-grenade.

Farrar .45 Hex Pistol: The Farrar Hex is a twin barreled, over and under pistol nearly as heavy as the vintage Desert Eagle .50 cal despite the Farrar Hex's polymer construction. The bulky pistol's top barrel fires a .45 caliber round through electro-chemical propulsion, allowing the bullet to strike with force and accuracy.

The weapon's under barrel is more exotic. The weapon fires a 'hex charge'- a bundle of excited electrons, artificially generated psychic energy and quantum viruses, designed to reduce an enemy's battlefield effectiveness to zero. Once per minute, the Hex Pistol gathers enough energy to fire a luck 'hex'. Hitting a target with the hex requires a ranged touch attack, and imposes a –1d4 luck penalty on the target's attack rolls, skill checks and saves for 1 round. The effects of multiple shots are cumulative.

Grimassi APSL-3 Needler Pistol: The Grimassi is a 'sub-lethal anti personnel weapon', which can be lethal if properly used and loaded, but is equally adept at bringing down lightly armored targets without killing. The Grimassi is a low slung, organic weapon, constructed entirely from non-metallic components. The weapon uses the chemical stimulation of artificial muscle fibers to fire lethally sharp, nano-active needles smaller than a blade of grass. A needler round is too fragile to be used as a weapon outside the clip; a gunman cannot use a non-fired needler round as a stabbing weapon for example.

The Grimassi inflicts moderate ballistic damage, and if the bio-chemically active needle makes blood contact with the victim, injects lethal or incapacitating neurotoxins. Each clip of Needler ammunition is molecularly encoded with any injury or ingestion toxin, including those described on page 54 of the D20 Modern core rulebook, or from the toxins described below. The cost of the toxin must be calculated separately and added to the base Purchase DC 4 cost of a clip of Needler ammo.

If the gunman possesses feats (such as Controlled Burst or Double Tap) which increases the damage done, the save DC increases by +1 for each additional die of damage inflicted, reflecting a heavier ‘dose’ of toxins.

Drawback: The Grimassi is designed to be used against lightly armored targets, and is virtually useless against heavily armored shock troops and Shells. The weapon cannot penetrate or cause injury against a target with Damage Resistance 5/- or greater, nor can it affect a target with a natural armor bonus or equipment bonus to Defense greater than +5. When used against a heavily armored target, the needle rounds simply shatter against the victim’s hull. The Grimassi is issued as a secondary, alternate sidearm for Choicer soldiers, never as a primary weapon, though the weapon is extremely popular on space stations, aircraft and other enclosed environments.

Choicer Nanotoxins: These new toxins are in common use among the Choicer military. Crafting a dose of these lethal toxins requires a basic working understanding of nanotechnology and pico-robotics. Possessing five or more ranks in Craft: electronic provides a +2 synergy bonus on Craft: chemical checks made to brew a dose of any of the following toxins.

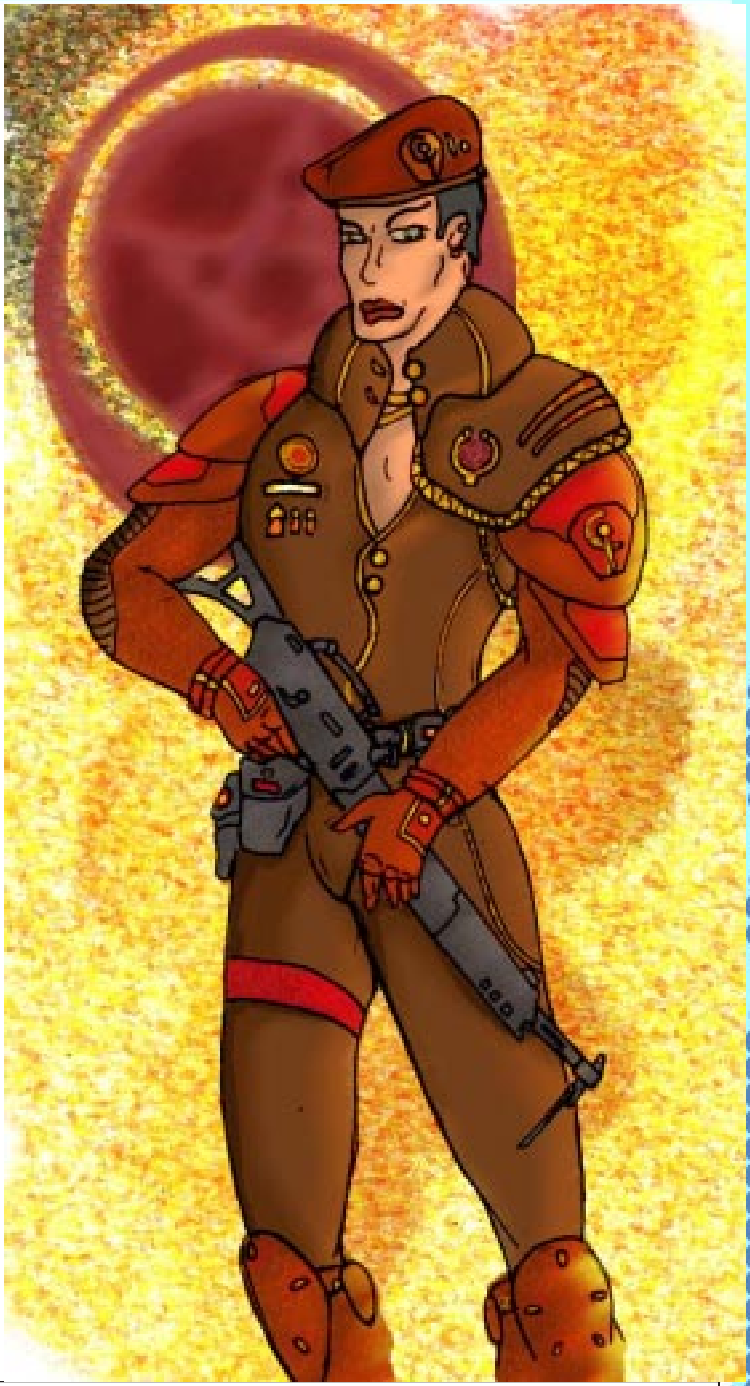


Table: Choicer Nano-Toxins

Choicer Nano-Toxin	Type	FORT Save DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Purchase DC	Restriction	Craft (chemical) DC	Time
Cardio-paralytic Enzyme	Injury	12	1d8 CON	1d4 CON*, unconsciousness 1d6 hours	17	Military (+3)	24	4 hrs
Lactic-retention enzyme	Injury	14	Target is exhausted for 3d6 hrs	Unconsciousness 1d6 hrs	15	Licensed (+1)	16	6 hrs
Saxitoxin IV	Injury	18	1d4+1 CON	2d4 CON	18	Military (+3)	32	16 hrs
Synaptic Jump Inhibitor	Injury	16	1d4 INT	2d4 INT*	22	Military (+3)	32	22 hrs
Streetsweeper Neuroload	Injury	14	1d6 CON	Paralysis 4d6 minutes	20	Military (+3)	34	16 hrs
Pacifier Nueroload	Injury	19	1d4 DEX	1d4 DEX, 1d4 WIS	16	Restricted (+2)	28	8 hrs

*A second save must be made 24 hours later to avoid permanent ability score loss.

Landstreet VII Light Laser Pistol: The Landstreet is a highly accurate laser pistol designed for distance shooting. The lasing process used to produce the Landstreet's beam lacks the raw destructive power of many other energy weapons, but suffers very little refraction through the atmosphere.

The Landstreet is a small, snub nosed pistol with a sleek, organic housing. The weapon's hilt is usually decorated with inscribed spiral or star designs. The weapon is easy to conceal; a Landstreet shooter receives a +2 equipment bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal the weapon.

Pendle 302 Kinetic-slam Shortbarrel: The 'Pendle-witch' is a high tech, shotgun like weapon popular among Choicer spec ops and police forces. The Pendle is a squat, short-barreled weapon, easily recognized thanks to the shallow protective cowl covering the trigger guard.

The Pendle fires a concentrated burst of pure kinetic energy, which slams into the target with the force of a wrecking ball. The weapon can be set to fire either lethal or subdual rounds, making it popular for crowd control and in prisons. Most police forces equip patrol officers with this weapon. Changing between firing modes is a move equivalent action; the shooter does not suffer any penalty for firing a non-lethal kinetic slam with the Pendle.

Rhea 5.6mm Mass Production Assault Rifle: The Rhea is a cheaply produced Choicer knockoff of the US military's archaic M-16 rifle. The Rhea was rushed into production during the first weeks of the War, designed for easy duplication by commercial matter-faxes and nano-fabricators. The Rhea was never intended for wide or permanent use; it was merely a stopgap measure, using a proven weapons design while the besieged Choicer nation acquired better arms.

The Rhea continued to be used for decades. Stockpiles and weapon caches were buried across the country. Today, the Rhea is a common weapon among volunteer Choicer militias, small or under funded police forces and criminals. The Rhea's design have been stolen and repurposed by everyone, making this slight modification of the venerable M-16 one of the most common assault rifles on the planet today.

Valiente 942A Psi-Pistol: Like the Conscience Bomb, which predates the Valiente 942A's introduction by several years, this verstile psi-weapon is designed to end conflicts without killing. The Valiente 942A is a popular weapon among prison guards, air-marshals, bounty hunters, and anyone who wants to incapacitate or discourage an enemy without killing or mass destruction.

The Valiente 942A is a short, wand like device, with a stubby, blunt projector instead of a conventional 'barrel', roughly the size of a .22 caliber holdout pistol. The weapon is easily concealable, and a shooter receives a +1 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal the weapon on their person.

Rather than inflicting damage, this weapon fires a beam of artificial psionic energy, carried on an energized ion stream carrier wave. This beam only requires a ranged touch attack to hit. A victim struck by this psionic beam must succeed at a DC 14 WILL Save or succumb to any one of the following effects. The Valiente 942A's user can switch between psi-beams as a full round action.

If the gunman possesses feats (such as Controlled Burst or Double Tap) which would normally increase the weapon's damage, the save DC increases by +1 for each additional die of damage inflicted, reflecting a heavier 'dose' of thought-viruses.

- **Diplomat-gun:** Unlike most weapons, this psychoactive device aims to defuse and de-escalate conflicts, using soothing sonic pulses and euphoria inducing psionic memes. The shooter receives a +4 equipment bonus on Diplomacy checks made against any creature who fails their save. This bonus remains in place for 1d4 hours. The victim of the psi-blast must be aware of who 'shot' him in order for the shooter to receive the Diplomacy bonus.

- **Fugue-gun:** This psychoactive weapon directly affects the target's mind, weakening their intellect, making concentration and memory difficult and sabotaging abstract reasoning. Victims hit by this weapon suffer a –4 circumstance penalty on all skill checks on a failed save. Headaches and disorientation from this weapon persist for 1d4 hours after a hit from the 942A Psi-Pistol.

- **Hunger-gun:** Anyone shot with this psi-bolt feels as if they are on the verge of starvation. The victim becomes *fatigued* on a failed save, and already fatigued victims become *exhausted* instead. During the hunger state, most victims will gorge themselves to the point of illness if the opportunity presents itself. The effect fades 1d4 hours after being hit.

- **Sleep-gun:** The psi-generators within the pistol fire a burst of narcotic emotions and artificial calm to 'sing enemies to sleep'. Creatures who fail their save fall asleep for 1d4 rounds. Creatures affected awaken instantly when they take damage.

- **Terror-gun:** The victim of this blast is attacked with a terrifying empathic assault. On a failed save, the victim becomes *panicked* for 1d4 rounds. Already *panicked* opponents become *cowering*.

Valiente Variable Encounter Weapons System: The Valiente VEWS is one widely regarded as one of the best squad support weapons of the 22nd Century. The VEWS consists of multiple barrels within a single casing, giving the shooter unparralled tactical choice. The shooter can switch between any of three firing modes as a free action.

MODE A: The core of the VEWS is a 'short-rail' micro-rail gun. Using extremely powerful magnetic launch rings, the VEWS can launch ferrous flachettes at supersonic speed equal to anything achieved by longer, bulkier weapons from a gun less than ½ the size!

MODE B: In addition to the mini-rail, the VEWS includes a drum fed 9mm machine gun. The ammo drum is attached to the side of the weapon, rather than its underbelly, in a configuration that maximizes ammo load, but sacrifices accuracy. Left handed shooters can fit drums with reversed feed ports to accommodate their perferred shooting stance.

Unfortunately, when firing the 9 mm machinegun on full autofire, the weapon's poor balance inflicts a –1 penalty on ranged attack rolls.

MODE C: Finally, the VEWS' top barrel, fitted just under the gun's low profile nightvision scope, is a mid-range argon laser rifle. The lime-green laser beam is designed for use on hardened, bullet-proof targets. A small energy cell for the laser is loaded into the weapon's buttstock.

Choicer Weapon Enhancements

The following gadgets are common among Choicer soldiers, and take advantage of the Choicer military's superiority in the nano-tech arms race.

Self Replicating Ammunition (PL 7)

A nano-factory is built into the weapon, which produces standard ammunition from ambient pollution and atmospheric impurities, a gun modified with this gadget never runs out of ammunition or needs to be reloaded; new rounds are created instantly each time the gun is fired.

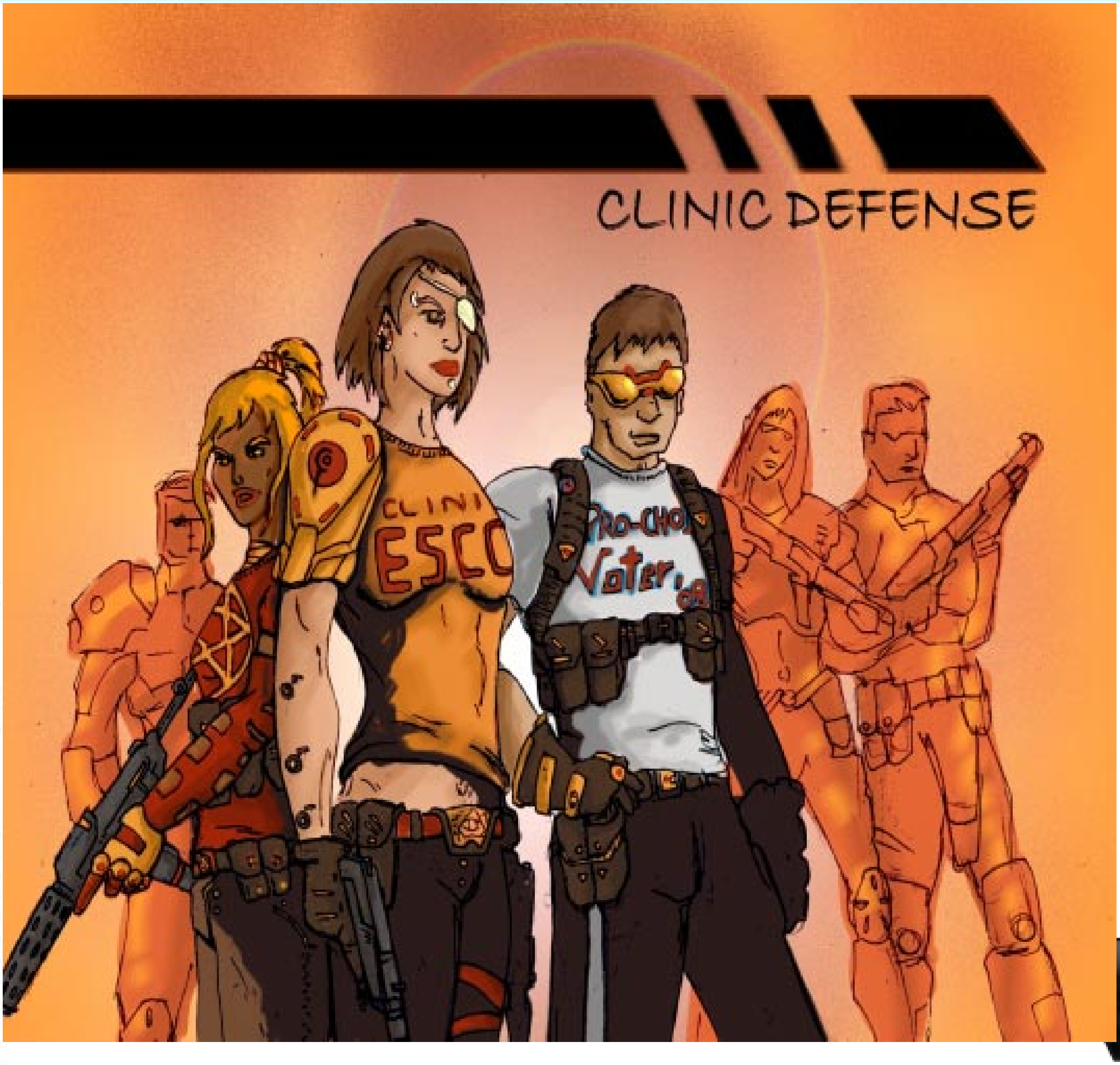
Restriction: Ranged ballistic weapons only

Purchase DC Modifier: +6

Predator Ammunition (PL 7)

Predator Ammunition is a catchall term for a wide variety of nano-active ammo types, all of which use micro-robotics to steer the slug through the victim's body to maximize tissue damage and ballistic damage, and which release deadly toxins directly into the wound track as they go. Wounds from Predator rounds are almost always fatal.

Any one wounded by a Predator round must succeed at a DC 12 FORT save or suffer 1d3



points of CON damage, in addition to the normal effects of being shot. If the gunman possesses feats (such as Controlled Burst or Double Tap) which increases the damage done, the save DC increases by +1 for each additional die of damage inflicted, reflecting the additional trauma and toxin dose of additional rounds impacting.

Restriction: Firearm ammunition only

Purchase DC Modifier: +6

Restriction: Increases base restriction by +2, to a minimum of +2 (Restricted).

Choicer Ranged Weapons	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction Rating
Adler .32 Machine Pistol	2d4 ballistic	20 / x3	50 ft	Full Auto	30 round box	Medium	3.25 lbs	16	(+2) Restricted
Campanelli MP Plasma Rifle (PL 7)	2d6 fire	20 / x2	75 ft	Full auto	40 cell	Large	13 lbs	22	(+3) Military
Conscience Bomb (PL 7)	None *	-	10 ft thrown	-	-	Tiny	0.25 lb	WILL DC 12: purchase dc 24 WILL DC 16: purchase dc 26 WILL DC 18: purchase dc 28	(+4) Illegal
Farrar 5.7 mm SMG (PL 7)	2d8 ballistic 5d6 slashing (grenade)	20/x2 ; none (grenade)	40 ft	Full auto ; single shot grenade	60 round box, single grenade	Medium	4.25 lbs	20	(+2) Restricted
Farrar .45 Hex Pistol (PL 7)	2d4 ballistic or Hex Burst	19-20 / x2	40 ft	Full Auto ; single shot: Hex	12 round box	Medium	4 lbs	23	(+3) Military
Grimassi APSL-3 Needler Pistol (PL 7)	1d8 ballistic plus poision (special)	19-20/x2	30 ft	Full Auto	30 round box	Tiny	2.25 lbs	15	(+3) Military
Landstreet VII Light Laser Pistol (PL 7)	1d6 force	20 / x 3	100 ft	Single, semi auto	15 cell	Tiny	0.5 lbs	15	(+2) Restricted
Pendle 302 Kinetic Slam Shortbarrel (PL 7)	2d8 force *	20 / x3	20 ft	Single	12 cell	Medium	4 lbs	17	(+1) Licensed
Rhea 5.6 mm Assault Rifle (PL 6)	2d8 ballistic	20 / x2	80 ft	Full Auto	30 box	Large	6.5 lbs	14	(+1) Licensed
Valiente 942A Psi-Pistol	None *	-	30 ft	Single	15 cell	Fine	0.5 lbs	28	(+1) Licensed
Valiente VEWS Rifle (PL 7)	A: 3d10 ballistic B: 2d8 ballistic C: 2d6 fire	A: 20/x3 B: 19-20/x2 C: 20/x2	A: 100 ft B: 40 ft C: 80 ft	A:Single B: Full C: Semi	A: 10box B:300 box C:20 cell	Large	22 lbs	24	(+3) Military

"Persephone" Mass Production Infantry Hard Suit (PL 7)

The Persephone MP is the backbone of the Choicer's mechanized infantry. This graceful, lightly armored Hard Suit epitomizes the Choicer government's tactical doctrines. Extremely nimble, this suit lacks the firepower to go toe-to-toe with Lifer shells, depending on well coordinated teamwork, cover and superior maneuverability to survive a firefight. The Persephone is an older, but still widely respected model of power armor, having been first deployed on a battlefield during the fall of 2061.

Physical Description: The Persephone MP is relatively slender suit of hard armor, which conforms closely to the proportions of the wearer. Each suit is custom fitted, with tailored inner layers designed specifically for the suit's assigned pilot. The Persephone's hull is sleek and nearly seamless; the lithe suit of armor has new external protrusions which would give a radar return. The suit's joints are intricately machined, and are almost invisible when the armor is immobile.

From a distance, the armor resembles a metallic sculpture of an humanoid figure in motion, not a cumbersome suit of power armor. The pilot's face is completely concealed beneath a opaque white visor. This visor is designed not to impede the pilot's peripheral vision, and is hinged just above the pilot's jaw line. Information, Mesh feeds and targeting data are displayed on the inner surface of the suit's face bowl. The pilot can push the visor up or lock it into place as a standard action.

Like all Choicer power armor, the Persephone is lacquered with a molecule thin layer of electro-responsive paint, allowing the suit to change color and patterning at will.

When the pilot is engaged in high visibility operations, such as parades or ceremonial duties, or an obvious deterence patrol, the armor is painted a glistening bronze/gold. The armor gleams in the sun like fine art.

Many units decorate their gleaming golden Persephone with crimson detailing; often the hard points over the pilot's breasts are painted a rich red, with the pilot's inner thighs painted a similar color to symbolize menstruation. Brown and crimson spiral designs cover the suit's arms and torso. Unit patches are typically worn on the left shoulder pad.

When the suit is under fire, the electro-responsive paint automatically darkens. Decorative touches melt away, and the Persephone MP goes into a dull, matte grey 'combat' color scheme. The pilot can alter this default combat paintjob to better suit the situation, allowing the Choicer soldier to display entirely new custom camo-patterns in a matter of seconds.

"Persephone" Mass Production Infantry Hard Suit

Standard PL 7 Design Specs

Size: Large Hard Suit designed to be worn by a Medium Pilot

Superstructure: Hardcarbon Composite

External Armor: Hardcarbon Composite

Armor Penalty: -1

Strength Bonus: +4 STR

Dexterity Bonus: +2 DEX

Speed: 45 ft (typically hovers 1-6 inches off the ground)

Bonus Hit Points: 60 HP

Hardness: Ten (10)

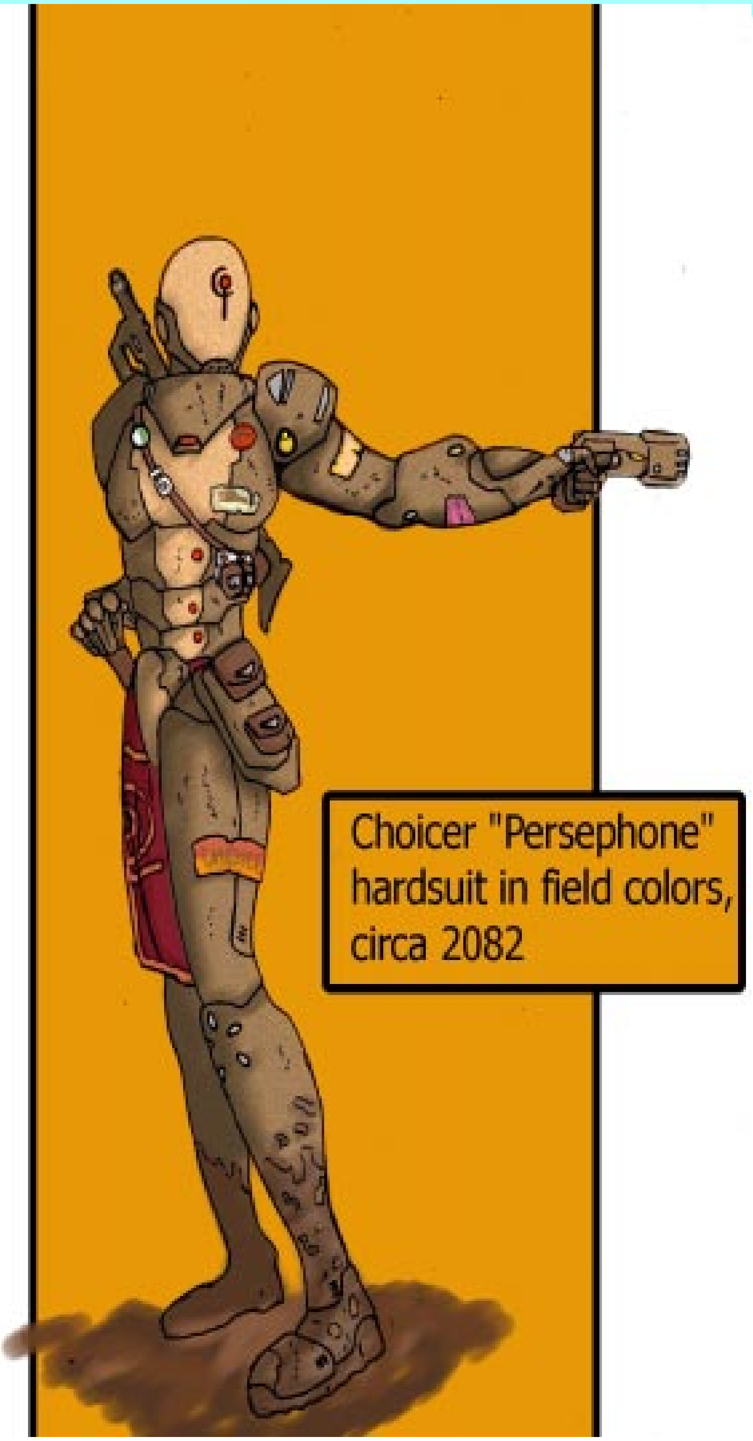
Defense Bonus: +3 (-1 size, +1 DEX, +3 equipment)

Reach: 10 ft

Additional Modifiers: +8 chassis bonus to Defense when targeted by any guided missile ; +2 equipment bonus on Hide checks ; +4 bonus on Spot and Listen checks ; +2 bonus on Initiative Checks

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Life Support, Electro-Reponsive Paintjob, Comfort Lining (shoulders), Mag Lev Skimmers (boots), Electronic Countermeasures (left arm), EM Dissonance Field (right arm), I.F.F. Transponder (back) , Medi-comp (torso), Sensors: Combat Enhancement Load (helmet)

Standard Weapons Loadout: Slam Attack (1d8+STR bludgeoning). No onboard weapon systems. Commonly deployed with a Campanelli MP Plasma Rifle as a standard firearm.


Choicer "Persephone" hardsuit in field colors, circa 2082

Base Purchase DC: 33 (Military +3)

Suit Variants:

Persephone Special Forces: Special operations models of this suit field a set of Monomolecular (x1) Combat Claws on the pilot's dominant hand. These masterwork weapons provide the pilot with a +1 masterwork bonus on melee attack and damage rolls, and inflict 3d8 points of slashing damage, threatening a critical hit on a natural 20. This enhancement does not dramatically increase the cost of the suit.

The Demeter: The Demeter is a variant Persephone model, built using the general purpose Demeter chassis. This variant model is designed for use by Choicer field medics. This variant removes the following systems: Sensors: Combat Enhancement Load, Electro-responsive Paintjob and EM Dissonance Field. This Hard Suit configuration removes all additional modifiers from the system.

The Demeter includes the following additional systems: Sensors: Medical/Scientific Grade (helmet) and a Shapememory Multitool on either the pilot's Left or Right arm.

The Demeter has a Base Purchase DC of 31, and has a restriction rating of Restricted (+2). The Demeter has an instantly recognizable white and crimson color scheme designed to clearly designate the power armor as an unarmed medic's suit.

The Persephone F (Post War Defensive Model): The Persephone remains a major part of the Choicer military arsenal, even after the war. The Persephone F incorporates miniaturized versions of the same "MacTik" force field technology which protects clinic force domes. This post-war variant was introduced in 2096, and is used almost exclusively by the Bedchamber Guards.

The Persephone F can be differentiated from the Persephone MP by the bulky, rounded triangle hump centered on the armor's spinal plating. This backpack-like array incorporates the two equipment slots necessary to field the Ablative Forcefield enhancement. The Persephone F has a

Base Purchase DC of 41, and has a Military (+3) Restriction rating.

As a standard action, the pilot can activate the Persephone F's force dome, which encompasses everything in an airtight, 30 ft spherical or hemispherical radius around the armor. The force dome has 100 HP and no hardness.

When the force dome is reduced to 0 HP, it shatters like glass, the feedback destroying the forcefield generator. A damaged forcefield recovers 1 HP per minute (requiring 100 minutes to return to full strength). The pilot can dissolve the forcefield as a free action.

"Slyph" Combat Softsuit (PL 7)

The Slyph is a high concealment combat skinsuit designed to be almost undetectably under a soldier's uniform, and is just as easy to conceal under a parka or light jacket. The Slyph is not considered a typical suit of power armor, instead this lightly armored bodystocking is the official 'uniform of the day' for Choicer special forces. The Slyph has been galmorized in dozens of action movies and mesh games as the 'suit which won the War'. Visitors to a Choicer military base will usually catch glimpses of Powered combat-types and Bastian black operatives conducting their daily business while wearing a Slyph suit.

Physical Description: The Slyph is a light Kevlar and spidersilk body stocking, which clings tightly to the contours of the pilot's body. The armor incorporates tightly woven padded areas in the places most likely to be load bearing: the pilot's shoulders and underarms, hips and inner thighs, so as to make carrying a field pack or parachute more comfortable.

Additional armor plating, made from an ultra-dense, glasslike composite provides additional protection. These thin but durable hard points protect the wearer's spinal column, shoulder blades, upper torso and abdomen, knees, forearms, groin, thighs and shins. The hard points are arranged in such a way as not to limit the pilot's mobility any more than necessary.

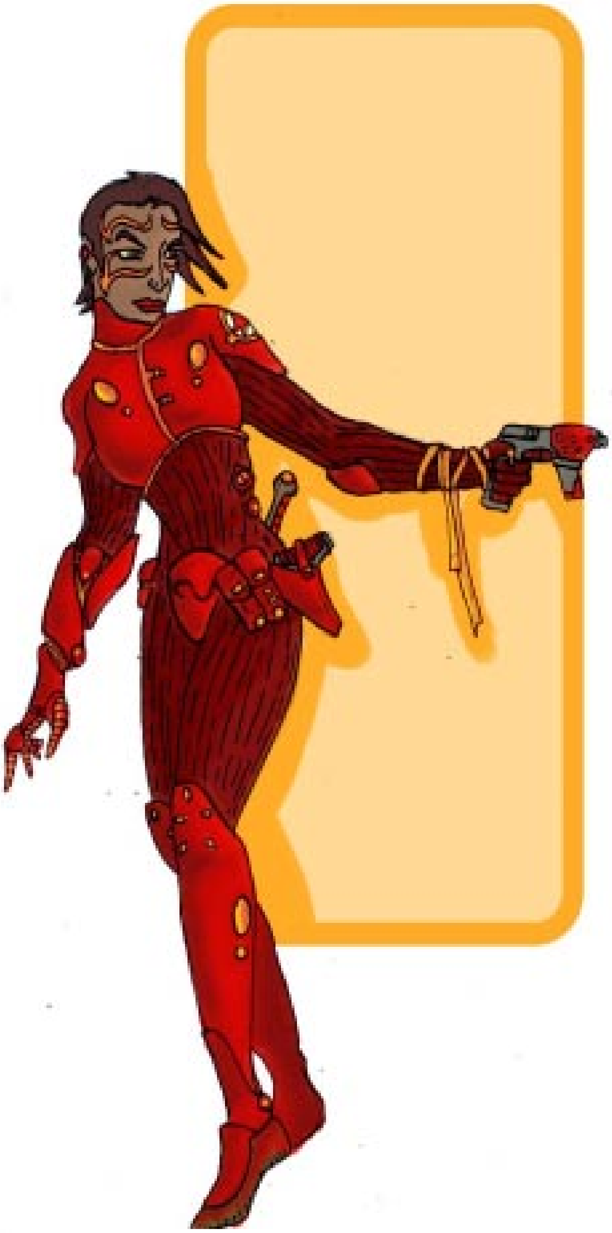
The Slyph does not incorporate a cowl or face bowl; if a pilot needs to seal the armor, he must make do with a nanotech Spray-Suit (usually carried in a belt pouch) or conventional breathing gear. When worn as a Choicer uniform, female soldiers accessorize the Slyph with a red, green or black beret or conical witches hat and veil, depending on the whims of the unit they are serving with.

The Slyph's default color scheme is a dull crimson, with the suit's dominant hand and arm dyed a dark burgundy, the color of dried blood. When in combat, the armor reverts to a black and grey urban camo pattern. The plastic hard points are intentionally kept dull, so as not to reflect light.

Standard PL 7 Design Specs
Size: Medium Skinsuit designed to be worn by a Medium pilot
Superstructure: Kevlar II Spidersilk
External Armor: Orbital Glass
Armor Penalty: -1
Strength Bonus: +0
Dexterity Bonus: +0
Speed: +0 ft
Bonus Hit Points: +35 HP
Hardness: Five (5)
Defense Bonus: +2 Equipment Bonus
Reach: 5 ft
Additional Modifiers: +2 equipment bonus on Hide checks

Combat Bonuses: The Combat Coordinator system built into the Slyph provides the pilot with a +2 Base Attack Bonus increase, as long as the suit is worn. This bonus may provide additional attacks for having a high BAB, but does not affect calculations based upon a creature's BAB, such as saves or feats.

Suit Sentience: The onboard AI has INT and WIS scores of 12 each. The onboard AI is typically programmed with the following skill ranks: Spot +5, Listen +3, Knowledge: tactics +2, and speaks one language chosen by the pilot or designer.



Standard Sensors and Equipment: Comfort Lining, Electro-Responsive Paintjob, Suit Sentience (pilot's offhand) Combat Coordinator (torso and pilot's dominant hand), Monomolecular x2 Combat Claws (pilot's dominant hand)

Standard Weapons Loadout: Combat Claws (4d6 slashing)
Base Purchase DC: 32 (Restriction Rating: Military +3)

Suit Variants: The suit is so effective in enhancing a soldier's combat capabilities it has been stolen and reverse engineered by a motley assortment of countries, mega-corps and pseudonations. Aside from color scheme and decorative elements, these knock off suits are identical to a Choicer Slyph.

APEX uses a knock-off of the Slyph known as the Razorsharp Featherlight Combat Exosuit. The Razorsharp's default color scheme is urban camo grey.

The Lifer version of the Slyph is referred to as the Archangel Enhancement Suit, and is slightly bulkier than its Choicer counterpart. Like most Lifer armors, the Archangel ES includes millimeter thin plasma display screens built into the suit's hard points. In this case, display screens on the suit's chest, upper thighs and forearms run a continual loop of Lifer propaganda. This enhancement does not increase the cost of a set of Archangel armor.

"Atlanta" Combat Air Suppority Shell (PL 7)

The Atlanta CAS is a fearsome close-air support armor, designed as the consummate airborne tank-buster. The Atlanta is designed to kill a Lifer hard suit with a single pass; it has ariel speed and nimbleness of an attack helicoptor, with a weapons load out lethal enough to do the 20th Century A-10 Warthog proud. Watching a squad of Atlantas drop from the sky and rocket towards a Lifer hover tank is an impressive sight, and a heartstoppingly terrifying one for any enemy soldier unfortunate to be whatever Lifer armor the Atlanta is pasting.

The Atlanta's weapons load is specifically tailored for tank busting: while the suit's chain gun fires depleted uranium rounds capable of chewing through most armor, the weapons most fearsome weapon is a radiation beam which ignores armor to kill the pilot within. Atlanta pilots are a special breed, justifiably proud of their impeccable combat record, and are experts darting through burning walls of anti-aircraft fire, at getting in close and destroying the target.

Physical Description: The Atlanta is a heavily armored, flight capable suit of power armor. The suit is top heavy and powerfully built, resembling a female warrior in heavy plate mail. The suit's bulbous shoulder pads are designed for maximum areodynamics and range of motion, giving them a unique and instantly recognizable 'squashed onion' shape, and are inlaid with nearly microscopic defensive laser emitters.

The Atlanta's flight systems are contained in a roughly canoe shaped jump-jet backpack integrated into the armor's spine, which rises a few inches above the tallest point on the suit's helmet. A pair of heavy duty "Mac-Tik" emitters are built into the lowest point of this jump pack, and maneuvering verners are spaced equidistantly around the flight pod, with additional maneuvering thrusters on the armor's hips and spinal plating. The combination of mak-tik emitters and conventional thrusters gives the Atlanta an unbeatable edge in air-to-air combat.

The Altanta's helmet is a swept forward version of the standard Persephone face bowl. Virtually the entire helmet is nano-active polymer, giving the pilot a wide field of vision.

The Atlanta's onboard weapon systems are integrated into the suit's bulky bracers, giving the suit a 'long sleeved' appearance. The short, triangular barrels of both weapons hand down a few inches past the tips of the pilot's gauntlets. The forearm weapons share a unique modular design, and are engineered to be easily repaired, replaced or hot-swapped.

Like all Choicer suits, the Atlanta's electro-responsive paint can shift instantly from a proud red and gold 'dress' configuration to a muted camo-scheme at will. When flying a combat air patrol, the Atlanta's hull is typically painted in digitally arranged blue, grey and white camo patterns, so as to best blend into the sky.

It should be noted that the Atlanta includes removable soles on the armor's boots, available as a standard feature. This design quirk is designed to allow Earthdancer trained Neo-Witches to use their innate speed to the fullest, and take advantage of the suit's sprinter endoskeleton at the same time. An Earthdancer trained Atlanta pilot is one of the fastest land animals on the planet, capable of outrunning most metahumans and light 'borgs. The Atlanta loses its environmental seal when the pilot goes barefoot.

"Atlanta" Combat Air Supporty Shell
Standard PL 7 Design Specs
Size: Huge Shell Suit designed to be worn by a Medium Pilot
Superstructure: Sculpted Chitin
External Armor: Hardcarbon Composite
Armor Penalty: -1
Strength Bonus: +9 STR
Dexterity Bonus: None
Speed: +15 ft
Flight Capabilities: 130 ft flight speed (perfect maneuverability)
Bonus Hit Points: 100 HP
Hardness: Eighteen (18)
Defense Bonus: -2 (-2 size)
Reach: 10 ft

Additional Modifiers: +8 chassis bonus on Defense against guided missiles, +8 equipment bonus on Navigate checks, +4 equipment bonus on Drive and Pilot checks, +4 bonus on Spot and Listen checks, +2 bonus on Initiative Checks

DR 10/- vs ballistic projectiles and +4 REF vs projectile explosives while Point Defense Grid is active (max 1 minute on period, 2 minute cool down cycle)

Sensors: Blindsight 180 ft

Feats: The pilot receives the Run feat while wearing the Atlanta armor.

Disadvantage/Design Flaw: Complex Launch. Requires 1 hour to pre-flight and fuel the suit, or 30 minutes with a DC 20 Pilot check.

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Life Support, Advanced Avionics x4, Onboard Navigation, Comfort Lining, Electro-responsive Paintjob, Blindsight Suite, Flight Mode (back) Expanded Flight Range (back), Sprinter Endoskeletion (left and right legs) Electronic Countermeasures (helmet), Sensors: Combat Enhancement Load (visor), Pseudomuscle Endoskeleton (torso), Point Defense Laser Grid (shoulders), AA-25 Downpour Chaingun (right arm), G.N. Stream (left arm)

Standard Weapons Loadout: Slam Attack (2d6+STR modifier) ; AA-25 Downpour Chain Gun: 6d6 points ballistic damage, 200 round drum, 50 ft range increment, capable of full autofire ; G.N. Stream. FORT Save DC 18 or 1d6 points of CON damage, ignores cover and Defense, 20 ft range increment, single shot only.

Base Purchase DC: 41 (Restriction Rating: Military +3)

Suit Variants: Individual Atlanta squadrons extensively customize their suits. It's fairly easy for a skilled mechanic to swap out the integrated weapons pods on the suit's gauntlets, allowing the suits to be tactically armed for any particular mission.

The most common variant weapon load swaps the G.N. Stream for a Pencil Box missile launcher or ULR Railgun. Atlantas are most usually deployed in this configuration for over the horizion strike missions. Conversely, the suit's chaingun is often swapped out for a flamethrower, Liq-N thrower, Dragon's Tooth shard cannon or other anti-personnel weapon when the pilot expects to go up against lightly armored infantry.

A few Atlanta squadrons forego the standard suit's strength enhancing Pseudo-Muscle Endoskeleton in favor of a Suit Sentience or Tailgunner Suit Brain. These variant suits are designed for air warfare exclusively, and see little purpose in enhancing the pilot's strength since melee combat is not a priority.

The Atlanta is also in wide use by APEX, as a counterpart to their "Nathan Rice" air interdiction shell. Aside from cosmetic differences APEX Atlantas and Choicer Atlantas are almost identical. The main difference is that APEX Atlantas do not include the removable boot soles.

Metamorphosis North "Blacklion" Anti-Personnel Precision Combat Shell (PL 7)

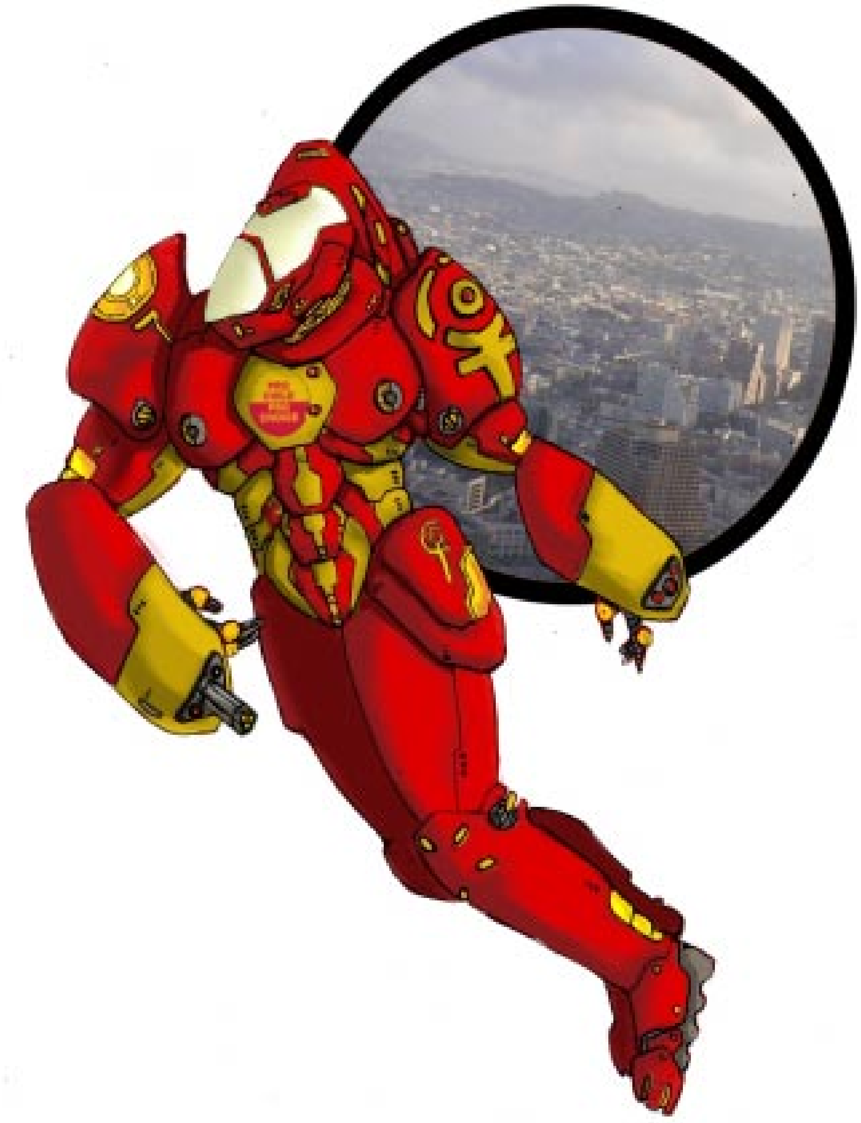
One of the most expensive suits of Power Armor on the planet, the Blacklion is far from a common, production line suit. Every component is unique, and most are handtooled to exacting specifications. Each individual Blacklion is custom fitted to its designated pilot, fitting the pilot like a second skin. The suit's onboard AI is grown from electronic infancy over a period of several days, during initial armor certifications, allowing the suit's personality to be perfectly tailored to the individual psychological needs of the pilot.

Metamorphosis North has produced fewer than 100 of these combat armors, the vast majority of which have been sold to the Bastian arm of the Choicer government. APEX fields a handful of Blacklions, for use by elite assassins and counter terror operatives, but generally favors a less expensive, easier to operate and longer range suit of armor. In the hands of a Covenant fencer, one trained in the intricacies of the suit, the Blacklion is one of the deadliest close combat shells on the planet.

Physical Description: The Blacklion is an impressive, ebony war machine. The Blacklion armor is as streamlined and graceful as it is possible for a heavy combat shell to be, with few external protrusions or equipment modules to break up the Shell's smooth lines. The Blacklion's helmet is featureless except for a handful of small optical systems spaced around a wedge-shaped, swept forward cowl. The armor is virtually featureless, lacking the decorative touches common to either conventional Choicer suits or Metamorphosis North products; the Blacklion is a killing tool with nothing in it's design philosophy to disguise that fact.

The Blacklion's combat claws are deployed from a slightly enlarged right forearm pod. The Blacklion's ultra-sharp blade is an iridescent purplish-black, like oil on water, and is a split, double-edged blade as long as a combat saber.

Metamorphosis North "Blacklion" Anti-Personnel Precision Combat Shell



Additional Modifiers: Combat Coordinator provides the pilot with a +5 increase to Base Attack Bonus while wearing the suit, which dramatically increases the pilot's combat lethality.
+2 equipment bonus on Hide checks, +4 equipment bonus on Spot and Listen checks, +2 equipment bonus on Initiative checks. Blindsight 180 ft, lowlight vision

Disadvantage/Design Flaw: Neural Feedback. When the Blacklion armor is damaged, the pilot feels the pain as a result of the intimate link between man and machine.

Any time the power armor is hit with an attack inflicting at least 25 points of damage, regardless of whether that attack penetrates the armor's Hardness, the pilot must succeed at a DC 14 WILL Save, or be *shaken* for 1d6 rounds. A pilot who is already *shaken* becomes *stunned* instead.

Standard PL 7 Design Specs
Size: Huge Shell Suit designed to be worn by a Medium pilot
Superstructure: Neovulcanium (ultradense x2)
External Armor: Sculpted Chitin plating
Armor Penalty: -5
Strength Bonus: +9
Dexterity Bonus: +0
Speed: 40 ft
Flight Capabilities: 30 ft (poor maneuverability)
Bonus Hit Points: 100
Hardness: 30
Defense Bonus: +3 (-2 size, +5 equipment)
Reach: 10 ft

Feats: Mag-Lev Skimmers provide the pilot with the Spring Attack feat.

Suit Sentience: The armor's onboard AI has INT and WIS scores of 16, and has the following skill ranks: Demolitions +7, Disable Device +7 , Spot +5, Listen +4, Speak Language (one of pilot's choice)

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Life Support, Comfort Lining, Electro-Responsive Paintjob, Ultra-Dense Armor (x2), Suit Sentience (helmet), Sensors: combat enhancement load (visor), Integrated nightvision goggles and Blindsight Suite (visor) Combat Coordinator +5 (right arm and back)

Pseudo-Muscle Endoskeleton (torso), Fan-Jets (Back), Mag-Lev Skimmer (boots), Enhanced Combat Claws (additional Right Arm slot), Eelshock Discharge System (left arm), Pencilbox Missile Launchers (shoulders)

Standard Weapons Loadout: Slam 2d6 + STR modifier ; Monomolecular, High Frequency Combat Claws (+1 masterwork bonus to attack and damage rolls, 3d8 slashing damage, ignores natural armor and equipment bonuses to Defense) ; Eelshock Discharge System (+3d6 electrical damage to melee attacks or +6d6 electrical damage to grapples) ; Pencilbox Missile Launchers (6 mini-missiles, variable loadout, typically non-lethal smoke or glue rounds)

Base Purchase DC: 44 (Restriction Rating: Military +3)

Suit Variants: The most common suit variant is the Blacklion 2108, a slightly improved version of the standard Blacklion. This version of the suit lacks the Neural Feedback disadvantage, and has a Base Purchase DC of 46.

May 3rd, 2105.
San Francisco, CA.
The Choicer Nation.

Back when he first started on the force, the older guys in the detective squad saddled him with the nickname Johnny Wow, mostly because as a nine foot tall full conversion cyborg, he made an impressive sight, but also because it quickly became clear that the 'borg was one goddamned good cop. Nobody called him Johnny Wow these days; most of the cops who gave him that old nickname were long since retired or in their graves from old age. Off hand, the big cyborg could think of only two or three people on the planet who even still knew about that nickname.

For John Watachowski, old age was a purely theoretical concept, something that happened to other people. Watachowski had been a detective since 2026, and assuming he held to his regular maintenance schedule and didn't choose suicide anytime in the next few decades, he'd probably still be a cop when 2126 rolled around, and 2226 after that. He liked that. Curiosity rode the big cyborg like a jockey, and in the near-century he'd been a cop he'd seen a history he never could of predicted or prepared for explode in front of his eyes. Seeing another few centuries worth of history- seeing how it all changed- that set right with him.

Of course, John wasn't thinking about the future today. Not deeply anyway. Instead, he squatted over a male body laying sprawled out on a Chinatown sidewalk, a bare half dozen feet from a smartlight vendor. He ignored the hovering uniform cops, swarming and impotent ambulance drivers, and the crowds of people watching from behind force field barriers. John enjoyed a pristine crime scene, soaking it all in with his enhanced senses.

"Now this is more like it, people. Good old fashioned murder."

The cyborg rumbled the words, a deep and surprisingly cheerful basso profundo from a cybernetic larynx. It was the kind of case Watachowski didn't get to work often these days, apolitical and unimportant to anyone save the people involved.

He'd shown some smarts and sensitivity investigating an abortion doc's murder back in 2031, and so Watachowski had been tapped to head future anti-choice terror investigations, acting as liaison between the city and the Covenant. When the War broke out, Watachowski had done his time with Choicer intelligence, even worked the frontlines during a few battles, but in his heart, he was a cop, not a soldier. He still spent most of his time working with the Choicers, and all too little time working the streets of his strange city.

John craned his neck and looked up at

his Covenant counterpart. Even squatting the cyborg came up nearly to the other man's eye line. His partner for the last three years was a sleek black man with a finely tailored crimson over cloak thrown over his neatly pressed suit, and blood red gloves on his hands. His name was First Detective Kareem Libcay, and his mahogany face was carved into the ritual mokos of a Bastian believer. From experience, John knew that Libcay's psi-linked familiar, an old Siamese named Dame was prowling the edges of the crime scene, recording the faces of gawkers. Libcay stifled a yawn.

"I know, refreshing isn't it? Still, he's one of ours, so I wanted to call you out."

John's mechanical joints snapped and hissed as he rose to his full height. The crowd behind him gasped as one, and John took a little glee in that. He hadn't bothered have the impact scars buffed out of his hull in two decades, or upgraded his chassis in nearly twice as long, but the blue and white 'borg was still an imposing sight. John stretched out his left hand towards the sprawled corpse, letting the scanning lasers in his forefingers play over the corpse. Particulate sensors in his wrist and forearm slid open and sampled the air above the crime scene, while ultrasound and MRI scans measured and quantified the slain man from the inside out.

"Do you have an ID on him?"

"Thorgard Martinez, born Pablo Francisco Martinez. He's Ásatrú, probably Coven of Two Ravens from the look of his fetishes. Forty three years old…"

"Looks fairly wealthy."

"That he is. At least wealthy enough. Smartlight programmer for Vine Universal. Decent bank on him, I'd say."

John considered, thoughtfully stroking his plastic chin with laminated Kevlar fingers. He looked out over the crowd of mostly Chinese faces, than glanced back down at the body.

"Notice his hammer is missing? Those scuffs on his belt say he definitely carried one, so where is it?"

Libcay smiled a bit, as Dame slipped between the ankles of unaware beat cops, and rubbed up against his pants leg. He bent down to scratch behind his familiar's ears, yawning again. "He's also missing his PDA and it looks like his smartlight memory files have been rifled through. Also, SFPD says he's licensed to carry a Valiente 942, and that's missing as well."

John yawns broadly, "Definitely looks like a straight up robbery. We're looking for some dumb youngster who's pagan enough to want a nice shinny new hammer, but not pagan enough not to shoot folks down."

"So you're not interested? I know it doesn't meet your high standards…"

John laughed, and the two men began walking back to the cyborg's specially reinforced patrol car. "Didn't say that. Like I said, this is a refreshing change of pace…..pure simple greed, not politics, no post-humans involved."

John looks out over his city one last time before sliding into the driver's seat. Libcay slides in beside him.

"We used to get a lot of these back in the old days…."

Mac-Tik: Machine Telekinesis

"Mac-Tik" technology is one of the fundamental, defining innovations in the Otherverse. Short for Machine Telekinesis, this technology powers everything from the impressive, azure force fields protecting Choicer abortion clinics and war machines to the ordinary civilian craft of 22nd Century America.

Machine Telekinesis, like Object Philosophies, are a scientific duplication of metahuman powers. Using neural maps of telekinetic brain activity as a template, Mac-Tik engineers built single-purpose AI that would generate impressive amounts of telekinetic energy. Using Mac-Tik engines, scientists could generate incredible amounts of telekinetic energy from only small amounts of electrical power. A small Mac-Tik engine hooked to a conventional car battery can generate a field of telekinetic energy strong enough to lift and maneuver several tons.

Mac-Tik technology was first used in military vehicles, creating quick and nimble hovercrafts and making “Shell suit” aviation a possibility. Unlike the bulky control surfaces and dangerous, combustible fuel needed by conventional aircraft, a Shell suit equipped with a Mac-Tik lifter system gains the airborne maneuverability of an attack copter without significantly increasing the suit’s bulk. The technology quickly migrated into the civilian sector, and by 2107, more than half the vehicles on America’s roads fly on a cushion of electric blue telekinetic energy.

Civilian Vehicles

Future America’s streets are crowded and overstressed. There are a variety of different vehicles on the road. Jury rigged autos from the present day have been rebuilt a dozen times, patched together and retrofitted to run on modern fuels and energy cells. Modern heavy trucks and cargo haulers rumble down heavy-transit lanes on massive, drumlike polymer wheels.

Light and agile civilian hovercraft, powered by Mac-Tik energy matrixes, dart between these lumbering goliaths. Modern passenger cars are sleek, as aerodynamic as a bullet and perfect for use as one or two person transports. Lifer vehicles tend to be heavier and have a bigger passenger capacity; Lifers stereotypically have larger families to carry, after all. Bikes and electro-cell mopeds are common, not only among the poor and eco-conscious, but among anyone wanting a way to avoid the ever present gridlock of the 22nd Century.

Gasoline is a thing of the past in America, but the prosperous Arab countries and many 3rd world nations still use fossil fuels. Most American vehicles are powered by high density storage batteries the size and shape of a soda can. Shell suits use higher capacity versions of these same energy cells, usually drawing on a half-dozen at once. These batteries are usually recharged every few months from micro-fusion reactors. Fusion reactors are common- a fusion ‘boiler room’ in the basement of a megacorp skyscraper provides enough power for several city blocks. Thanks to micro-reactors the size of a water heater, providing electricity has become a profitable sideline for most companies.

Caterpillar Multi-Axel Haulers: Caterpillar class cargo vehicles are some of the largest, heaviest vehicles on the road, capable of hauling truly massive amounts of cargo. These vehicles resemble modern semis or tanker trucks, but are built to a much more massive scale. The core section of a caterpillar encompasses the driver’s cabin and engine. Mission specific modular storage and cargo modules can attached to the caterpillar’s core section, like the traincars on a locomotive.

The core module and each swappable cargo module have their own independent suspension, each with 4-8 independent axels and sets of massive, high density polymer wheels. To assist in maneuvering, each cargo module is equipped with steering programs and safety systems, allowing the train like vehicle to easily traverse crowded city streets.

The Caterpillar’s core module is 3 squares wide and 4 squares long, with its own enclosed, airtight space for cargo. Each swappable cargo module is 3 squares wide and 3 squares long; depending on configuration, these modules can be flat beds, airtight containment tanks or refrigerated or non-refrigerated cargo space. Cargo boxes include modular shelving and tie down systems, allowing the vehicle to carry a wide variety of different cargos safely. Each Caterpillar typically mounts 2-4 cargo modules.

Each cargo module mounted inflicts an additional –1 Initiative and Maneuver penalty to the core module and reduces its top speed by 20 squares (2 chase scale squares).

Lifer protesters often equip massive Caterpillar haulers as command centers for street demonstrations. Referred to as “Truth Trucks” these multi-axel behemoths are reinforced with additional armor, covered in anti-abortion art and high resolution display screens, which run continual loops of gory propaganda. Instead of traditional cargo modules, these vehicles are often equipped with high-end recording and communications gear, allowing them to broadcast live from a ‘rescue’. Others are equipped as mobile museums, with complex walk in displays or miniature hell-houses designed to shock-convert audiences.

Mac-Tik Coupe: Mac-Tik coupes are one of the most common vehicles on the roads today. These low slung, aerodynamic vehicles blend civilian comfort with military styling; even a suburbanite commuter’s flow coupe looks as fast and lethal as a war plane. These vehicles have a fighter-plane style clamshell canopy; the front windscreen and side panels split open to allow access to the vehicle.

Mac-Tik coupes are marketed as sports and luxury vehicles, equipped with automatic drive capabilities, a limited use ‘dumb-AI’ with a Drive skill of +4 and access to constantly updating GPS nav-data. The coupe can be ordered to drive itself to a destination via voice command from an authorized user. The coupe is two squares wide, three squares long.

Most auto makers market their coupes at the Choicer market- with ad campaigns emphasizing the freedom of the open road. The coupe’s small size makes it impractical for the large families common in Lifer culture; Lifer coupes are marketed at businessmen and commuters, and often emphasize the vehicle’s luxury features.

Choicer Brands: Hestia-Bryne Sojourn ; Toyota Haley-S ; Diana Automota Sprint ; Porsche F-261 ; Acura Moonwyld

Lifer Brands: BMW-Chrysler Progress ; Mercury Resolute ; Ford City-Ranger

Mac-Tik Light Trucks: Light hover trucks are common in business and industry. These sleek pickups resemble the miniaturized light trucks common to Japan and China. Their small size and power efficiency makes these light vehicles ideal for urban couriers, small families, and for duty on enclosed out-colonies.

Mac-Tik Light Trucks feature clamshell passenger cabins, set above the engine. The driver pulls the windscreen and transparent, bubble canopy down and forward to enter or exit the vehicle. These vehicles share the auto drive capability common to most modern vehicles.

A Mac-Tik Light Truck is 2 squares wide and 3 squares long.

Choicer Brands: Ford Messenger-Choice ; Toyota Rabbit ; Toyota Journeyman ; Suzuki Inner-Road ; Hestia-Bryne Chase

Lifer Brands: Ford Messenger ; Toyota Sunrise F; Toyota Meson ; Toyota Quantum Star ; Samson Motors Equity

Mac-Tik Sprint Haulers: Sprint Haulers are a class of civilian cargo and passenger vehicles, effectively a minivan style chassis equipped 2-3 Mac-Tik emitters spaced equidistantly on the underside of the vehicle. Like most M-T vehicles, sprint haulers are aerodynamically designed, and rounded for dramatic contours. Unlike coupes, sprint haulers are designed for passenger and cargo capacity, not sheer speed. Sprint Haulers share all the luxury features, including auto drive capacity, of mac-tik coupes.

Sprint Haulers are marketed at the Lifer market, offering speed and protection as well as a way to carry huge families. The vehicles are equally popular among businesses, and are often issued as company cars.

Sprint Haulers are usually 2 squares wide, and 4 squares long.

Choicer Brands: Hestia-Bryne Hathor ; Ford Civica-Choice

Lifer Brands: Ford Civica ; Ford Gentlestreet ; Samson Motors Accuracy ; Dodge-Seattle Paragon

Sport Moped: Mopeds are popular among city dwellers, being much more agile, fuel efficient and compact than even the smallest car. As gas prices rose during the mid 21st century, these

Vehicle	Crew/ Pass	Cargo	Inititive	Manuever Penalty	Top Speed	Defense	Hardness	Hit Points	Size	Purc DC
Caterpillar Multi-Axel Hauler (PL 6)	1-1	500 lbs	-4	-4	150 (15)	6	8	45	Gar	42
Caterpillar Cargo Module (PL 6)	n/a	1,000 lbs	-1 *	-1 *	-20 (2)	6	10	38	Gar	28
Mac-Tik Coupe (PL 6)	1-1	80 lbs	+0	-1	280 (28)	8	5	32	Huge	29
Mac-Tik Light Truck (PL 6)	1-1	550 lbs	-2	-1	200 (20)	8	5	35	Huge	30
Flow Field Sprint Hauler (PL 6)	1-4	400 lbs	-2	-2	175 (17)	8	5	40	Huge	30
Moped (PL 5)	1-1 *	25 lbs	-1	+0	95/9 or 70/7*	10	5	14	Med	18

colorful scooters become more and more popular. By the time the War began, electric mopeds powered by high density batteries outnumbered liquid fuel mopeds.

Mopeds are slightly more stable than motorcycles, and in many juridictions can be operated without a license, making them popular among high school and college students. Mopeds are equally popular on large, enclosed out-colonies; Solomon Station and Diana Base boast 40-50 mopeds or other ultra-lite vehicles for every conventional auto.

Like a motorcycle, you can mount or dismount a moped as a free action. A moped occupies one square, and provides no cover to its occupants. A moped can carry a single passenger, but doing so dramatically reduces the vehicle's speed.

Clinic Force Domes

The Choicer government protects its women's temples, abortion clinics, police stations and important government offices behind a shimmering wall of watery azure light. The first clinic force domes came on line during the turbulent 2040s, as a generation of proto-Lifer terrorists tested the arms and tactics of the Army of God against an unprepared Choicer nation. The watery light of a clinic force dome has become the iconic image of 22nd Century America. The War has transformed the country into a blue tinted world.

Choicer force fields are artificially generated fields of stable telekinetic energy, capable of withstanding anything up to and including an orbital bombardment. These fields are far more durable than a vehicle's maneuvering field; where a hovercoupe's Mac-Tik field feels like a wave of pressurized air, military force fields are solid. Touching one feels like touching smooth, slightly electrified glass.

A typical Choicer force dome is projected by a series of rib-like pylons rising from beneath the protected structure. By drawing on a city's power grid or a building's internal fusion reactor, the force dome can be extended to cover a wide area. A standard Choicer field system can easily protect a free standing clinic the size of a modern small office building. Larger structures can be protected beneath interlaced fields. Aradia Isle, the Choicer seat of power rising out of San Francisco Bay, is protected beneath several dozen force screens.

Choicer force domes are hemispherical energy fields with 200 HP and Hardness 20. When the force dome is reduced to 0 HP, it shatters like glass, the feedback destroying the forcefield generator. A damaged forcefield recovers 1 HP per minute (requiring 200 minutes to return to full strength). Most standard clinic force domes encompass an area with a diameter of 300 ft with a 300 ft vertical clearance, more than enough to envelop a small building. Larger fields are available, but cost substantially more, with each additional 30 ft effective diameter raising the purchase DC by +2.

It is usually cheaper to install multiple smaller force domes rather than a single large one. Having multiple field emitters also provides some degree of redundancy in case one field shatters and fries the emitter.

The force dome is non airtight, and does not block electronic transmissions. The field is controlled from within, or by secure wireless communication. As a standard action, a user can raise or lower a force dome. On magically active campaign worlds, the forcedome does not block gaze attacks. Normally when visitors wish to enter the force dome, the field is briefly extended to envelop them, and an inner 'door' is opened in the energy umbra, similar to an airlock. Alternatively, the force field's operator can simply choose to open a hole in the field large enough for a person or vehicle to pass through.

A standard force field emitter weighs upwards of 2.5 tons, and has a Purchase DC of 41, with a restriction rating of Restricted (+2).

Sanctuary Field Generator: The Sanctuary Field Generator is a miniaturized version of the massive force shield projectors which protect Choicer women's temples. Unfortunately, Sanctuary generators, even at their smallest are the size of a modern laptop, and weigh more than ten pounds. For a priestess under fire, the weight is a small price to pay for the safety of a glistening, invulnerable force dome.

This device is a bulky, black or grey plastic device topped with a smooth projection lens. In both size and shape it resembles a modern laptop. Most users wear a Sanctuary field generator as a backpack or slung from a shoulder strap. Despite their high cost, these devices are common sights in the embattled cities of 22nd Century America.

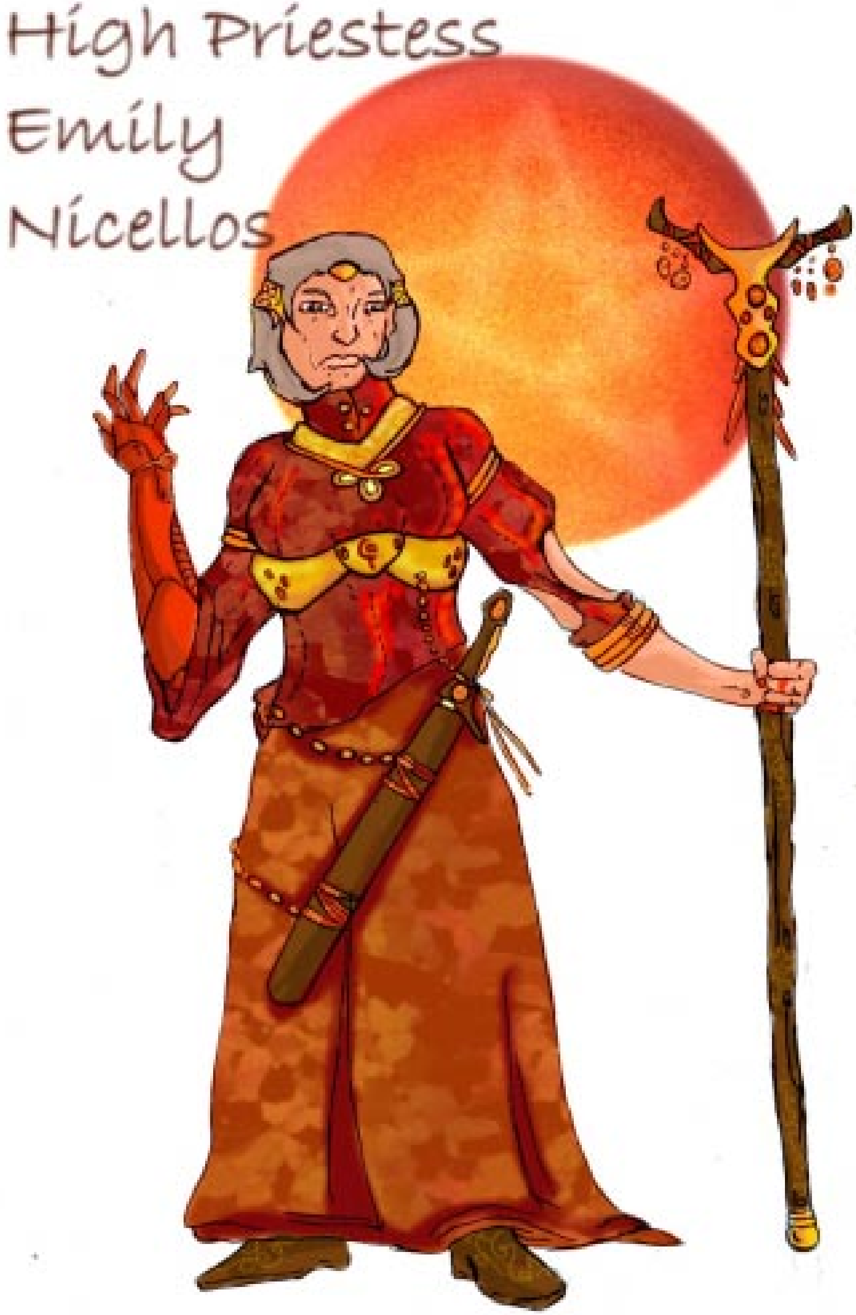
The Sanctuary Generator projects an iridescent bluish/white defensive field around the wearer or any Medium-sized object or creature within 30 ft. The field provides the user with Damage Reduction 5/-, and blocks force effects from crossing the barrier, preventing some breeds of lasers and spells such as *magic missile* from harming the user. The field occupies a 5 ft square, and does not move. A user must deactivate and reactivate the field to change its position. Activating the field is a standard action.

The Sanctuary Field Generator can function continually for up to 2 hours before its batteries are drained. The Sanctuary recharges automatically, absorbing kinetic energy from the wearer's motion; a drained generator recharges fully in 8-10 hours.

A Sanctuary Field Generator weighs about 10 lbs, and has a Purchase DC of 22. It is a Licensed (+1) item.

Choicer Armor

Choicer body armor is often fundamentally similar to the armor worn by other factions, and is usually purchased from the same fabricators. Styling might vary a bit, incorporating pagan motifs and symbols (as well as the Paganized gadget, described elsewhere) but in most cases Choicer soldiers go into battle wearing similar uniforms to their mainstream counterparts. The armors described below are the exception.



These uniquely pagan and uniquely Choicer suits of armor have a place of honor within the nation's history. More than just suits of body armor, these armors signify the wearer's place in Choicer society.

Escort's Vest: The heavy, bullet proof vests worn by volunteer clinic defenders and patient escorts have been an icon of the pro-choice movement since the early 1980s. Most defenders are forced to make do with improvised, homemade or self-purchased armor, but some well equipped clinics offer their staff and patients more durable body armor.

A typical Escort's Vest is a bulky Kevlar II armored vest, with integrated groin protector and gorget, reinforced with drop-in poly-steel or ceramic plates. Most of these vests are painted a eye-popping yellow or orange, and are designed with nearly a dozen large equipment pockets spread across the breast plate and hips. Choicer slogans and designs are sewn into the armor, often with illuminated fiber optic threads. High visibility, not stealth, is the name of the game.

Some Escort Vests are fitted with a Medi-comp sensor system, allowing a clinic director to know instantly if one of her volunteer defenders or patients is wounded during a protest. Choicer infantry and tank crews are equipped with an undecorated, matte grey or urban camo pattern Escort Vest equipped with the Medi-comp system.

Vestal Shawl: Important lawmakers and celebrities of all nations protect themselves beneath concealed and concealable armor, and the Choicers are no exception. Hand-sewn armored robes, vestments and kimonos protect the High Priestess, the Woven Circle and important figures in the Covenant's business community.

"Vestal Shawl" is a generic term for any of several brands of soft armor, designed to give comprehensive protection without being obvious. The price given is for an off the rack set of robes; designer armor-wear can have a purchase DC in the mid 30s!

All Vestal Shawls are designed to protect against light energy weapons, and grant the wearer Fire and Electricity Resistance 2.

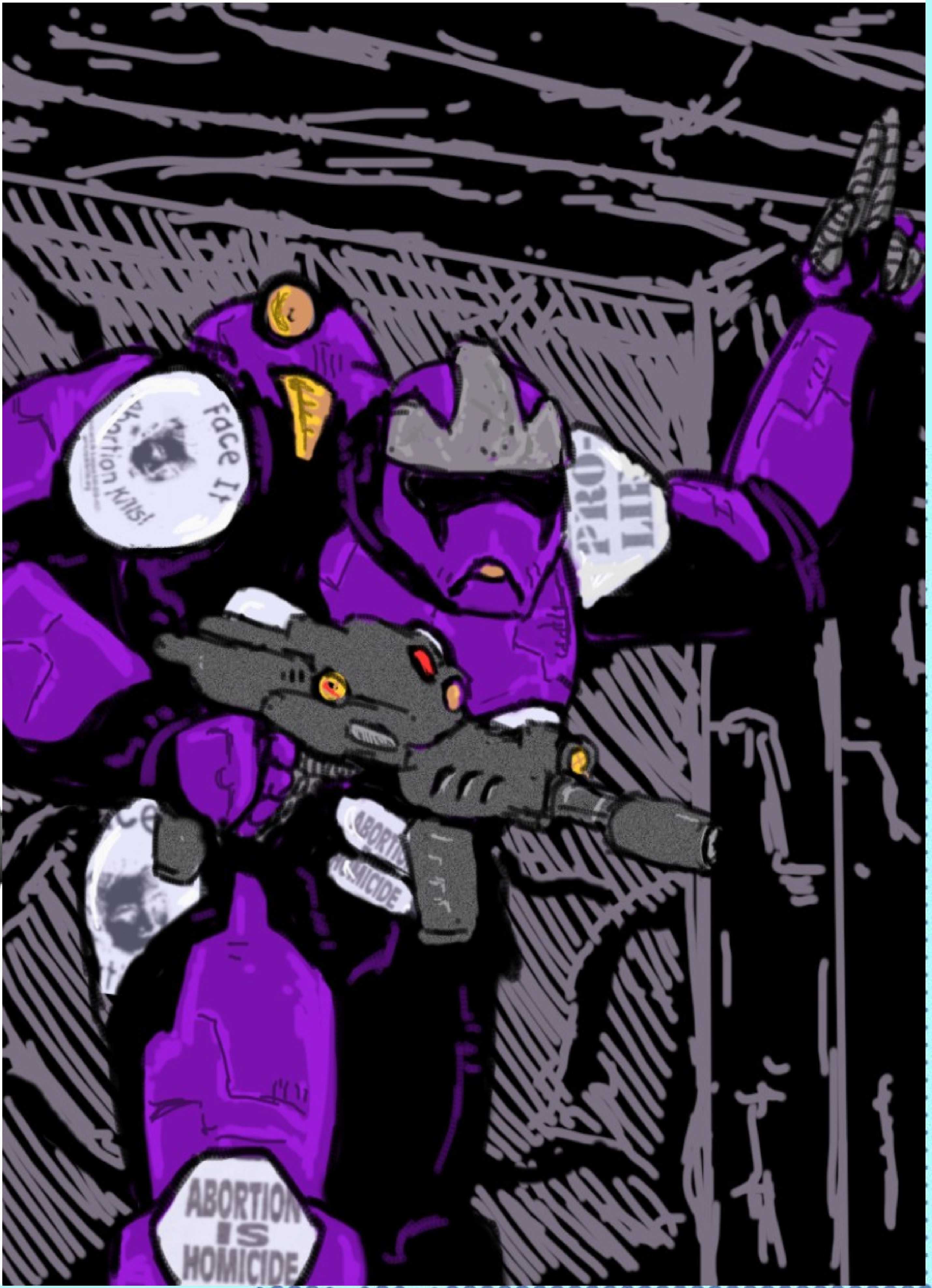
The Robes are chemically hardened against Force effects, providing the wearer with Force Resistance 5 against any force effect, which provides decent protection against some types of laser weapon and many Powers.

Sanguine 3: Sanguine 3 is comfortable, easy to wear suit of full body armor designed by Metamorphosis North and sold almost exclusively to the Choicer military. The body hugging suits are composed primarily of woven Kevlar II and genetically engineered spider silk, giving the suit great durability without the need for additional 'slip-in' armor plates.

Sanguine 3 is heat and cold resistant, designed to act as hostile environment protection, at least in the short term. The wearer receives Fire and Cold Resistance 5. Suits of Sanguine 3 armor are custom-woven for their wearers, and are impregnated with Demographic Cloth comfort layering, specifically tailored to the designated wearer. This provides the wearer with a +1 equipment bonus on certain FORT Saves.

Sanguine 3 is commonly issued to young Neo-Witch Midwives, who wear are allowed to wear the distinctly painted armor as a badge of office. A Midwife's armor is a slick, cherry red, similar to the color of her nanonics, with auburn, gold or violet trim. Choicer Special Forces units are equipped with a set of dark brown or matte black Sanguine 3 armor as their standard field uniform. Choicer soldiers often accessorize the armor with a detachable gas mask and bio-filter, to protect themselves against tear gas and other bio-war agents.

Choicer Body Armor	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonproficient Bonus	Max DEX Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft)	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction Rating
Escort's Vest	Med tactical	+5	+2	+1	-4	25 ft	8 lbs	12 (DC 23 Medicomp)	-
Sanquine 3	Med Tactical	+6	+2	+3	-2	30 ft	3.5 lbs	24	(+1) Licensed
Vestal Shawl	Light Concealable	+2	+2	+6	-0	30 ft	1.5 - 2 lbs	19	-


Face It
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Chapter Three: Closed: The Manual of Pro-Life Tactical Doctrine

"I've also been thinking about a smaller group within the core. I'm looking for people of unusual intelligence and courage. I don't mean to disparage the sincerity of others in the church, especially those on the leadership team. But some of them are timid, some old, many infirm. I've been praying about sort of an inner circle of people who want to do more than just survive. ... doesn't part of you want to jump into the battle?"

Rayford was intrigued but not sure. Chloe was more eager. "A cause," she said. "Something not just to die for but to live for."

"Yes!"

"A group, a team, a force," Chloe said.

"You've got it. A force."

Chloe's eyes were bright with interest. Rayford loved her youth and her eagerness to commit to a cause that to her was only hours old. "And what is it you call this period?" she asked.

"The Tribulation," Bruce said.

"So your little group inside the group, a sort of Green Berets, would be your Tribulation force."

"Tribulation Force," Bruce said, looking at Rayford and rising to scribble it on his flip chart. "I like it."

-Tim Le Haye and Jerry Jenkins, Left Behind

Ellen's Story

I. On the Sidewalk
Christmas Eve, 2058.
Boston, MA.

Ellen Dacoveney spoke softly, using the same words, same gentle but persistent intonations she used back when she was only another volunteer sidewalk counselor in Pensacola. Despite the whispered, subconscious warnings from the semantic-guide AI implanted in her frontal lobe, she abandoned the suggested first contact protocols and went off script. With something less than a conscious thought, she disabled the oratory software, and just spoke. The same way she used to, before she founded the Coalition, before she stepped onto the world stage, before she formed the Army. Old fashioned sidewalk rescue.

Ellen's breath steamed in the cold night air as she spoke those old, familiar words, the corner-stone words of her life.

"Abortion is murder."

Alien eyes stare up at Ellen Dacoveney, and their combat sensors reduce the speaking woman to a skeletal overlay with weak points conveniently mapped. Her heat signature paints Ellen in shades of molten gold, and a second, almost human heat bloom pulses slowly in the woman's swollen abdomen. Angular alphanumerics and threat assessment symbols flash across the alien's field of vision. The heat-bloom mirage/ woman is reaching out a boiling hand through the infrared void of the snowstorm. And unaware (but not unsuspecting) what the alien woman is seeing, Ellen keeps speaking, in that same intent low whisper.

"No matter who denies that, it's an unquestioned fact. Look at me, at my belly...."

And under the weight of those words, the terror of the stars is on her knees atop a Boston skyscraper, broken. Her ebony carapace is pitted and cracked with the stress of reentry, and her gunmetal grey skin is shredded in places, where *her armor has been burnt completely away. Dried black blood splatters the alien woman's chest and belly, old blood, never washed away. The alien woman's weapons are useless, her gun barrels bent and her ammunition gone. The steel crown that the alien once wore so proudly above her brow is ruined, half melted to slag.*

And Ellen's very human hand strokes the injured alien's shattered crown, as gently as a mother brushing out her daughter's hair. Ellens long, well manicured finger nails are the same subdued, pastel purple as her lips. The silk sleeve of a thousand dollar business suit rustles as it slides over the cyborg warrior's armor.

"Look at me with your enhanced senses. Look at my belly, at my Fairfax. He's twisting; he's kicking. Turn on your IR optics and your starlight scopes and look!"

And the alien, who was once Empress of a galactic armada so vast it blotted out the stars, obeys without question. Those camera lens eyes zoom in on the woman's belly. Data pours in from a dozen different sensors. A target lock flashes around the second trimester fetus, and for the first time in her long existence, the star-goddess is ashamed of the lethal data flashing across her retinas.

"See how he moves? See how his heart beats? Can you see it?"

One hand on her swollen belly, hidden behind an expensive white blouse, the other on the cyborg's forehead, the woman continues to speak.

"His heartbeat is a unique rhythm, so different from my own. His Krillian aura is finally establishing itself. His genetic pattern.... he's going to grow up a perfect human male. Dark haired like my daddy, and with such unlimited potential. Even his fingerprints and the patterns on his retinas are just beginning to take shape. He is an individual. A person. A life; a human life."

The star-goddess stares up at the woman with watery eyes. She's crying something like human tears; the obsidian liquid spills from her broken bio-mechanical eyes. Then, with the quiet, buzzing hum of a dying battery, the alien cyborg turns off her enhanced senses and just looks at Ellen standing there with human-like eyes. Stripped of alien info-systems, Ellen is simply a woman, brunette and slender, shivering in a neatly tailored grey suit. Half the height and a quarter of the weight, at best, Ellen Dacoveney still dwarfs the alien. She keeps saying those words, boring them into her listener's soul.

"Abortion is murder."

The star-goddess recoils from the venom in those words, blinking quickly. She looks up at the woman in confusion from her place on the snow-covered rooftop. High altitude winds tear at the cyborg's blasted hull, carrying away flakes of blood and meteorite dust. And Ellen is still speaking, uninterrupted, not even seeing the cyborg any more, just reciting her creed.

"It's a quiet, insidious kind of murder that happens- our day, one of our planetary rotations is twenty four hours. And more than seven thousand of these quiet murders happen in one orbital day. "

And she goes down on her knees at the alien's side, not even feeling the cold as it soaks through her knees, "Every single day."

She whispers the words again, directly into the alien's ear. And she stands, rises, dusting the snow off her knees. Ellen's jacket whips and pops in the wind as she turns away from the cyborg. She looks out over the city of Boston, over the city she has made hers. Here and there, spread across the lights of the midnight city, columns of blazing blue fire climbing towards the sky. These cold blue spears are visible from space, she knows. Ellen stares at the blue spires with cold hate, and lowers her voice to a whisper again.

"The murders, they happen in killing fields, black temples protected by blue force fields. The blue glow, it's visible from space. I know you saw those blue lights as you came down. I've always believed.... that those lights,

they're a warning to star-travelers, a badge of shame. They let the universe know what kind of species we really are."

Ellen turns from the cobalt spears, and kneels beside the alien again. She presses the cyborg's face to her belly, and strokes her shattered crown. She kisses the cyborg gently on the crown.

"I know.... I know what happened to you. I know what you were forced to do...."

The goddess' eyes go wide, and she stands with shock. Pieces of over stressed armor crumble as she rises. She takes a step back from the woman, her heavy purple boots crunching into the snow. Her shadow falls over the kneeling human woman, and Ellen forces herself not to shudder. The alien's roar begins strong and angry, and fades quickly, lost upon the wind, "HOW DOES A mortal-"

Ellen's eyes bore into the alien's. She refuses to blink, to flinch.

"I know. I also know how much you wish you could take it all back. Help me stop these murders. The humans who've endured one of these.... butcheries, their emotions are more like yours than you'd realize. Seeking forgiveness becomes your whole world, doesn't it?"

Metallic fists clench with a creak like a collapsing bridge stanchion, and the two women face each other across a snow covered rooftop. Ellen stands in the goddess' massive shadow, waiting for the creature's judgment. And the alien goddess lowers her head, and lets her black tears flow. She is beaten, "WHAT i DID cannot BE FORGIVEN NOR undone."

And Ellen soars inside, knowing she's won. She takes the giant's gauntleted fingers in her own. She can barely fit both hands around the star-goddess's massive purple and obsidian gauntlet, and she squeezes hard as she can, knowing the alien can't even feel it.

"YES! Yes, it can! My God, the true human God, offers forgiveness. Purpose. Hope. Help me stop these murders. Please, I'm begging you. Don't let what happened to the Grey happen to homo sapiens. Find your own salvation by giving us ours."

The cyborg makes her decision. She raises a trembling steel hand that's strong enough to crush a tank and lightly embraces the human woman. They stand together on the roof top.

"You, you may not think so, but you are an angel. An armored angel with the power to save my world. You know what those blue lights are now, and you can't look away can you? You can't retreat to the stars while my species commits suicide. Can you?"

The cyborg looks out across the ancient city. Her metal eyes narrow with new purpose, with a reason to live after being alone in the dark for so long. The cyborg raises her damaged main cannon to her eye level. She runs system diagnostics, curses inwardly, and knows even in her weakened state, she knows her remaining weapons will be enough.

"THEIR SHIELDS are ONLY CRUDE quantum-foam BARRIERS. EVEN IN my fallen STATE i CAN-"

"Thank you, thank you my angel...."

Ellen runs her fingers through the tears trickling from the cyborg's camera-lens eyes, stroking her metallic cheek.

Ellen: "...but you are wounded. Rest now. Let my organization rebuild you."

And the alien lets her massive, broken body relax. She lets the smaller human embrace her, hugging her hard amid the driving blizzard.

"Let me assemble an army worthy of you….. Become my general. Lead my army…..rescue my- rescue my species…."

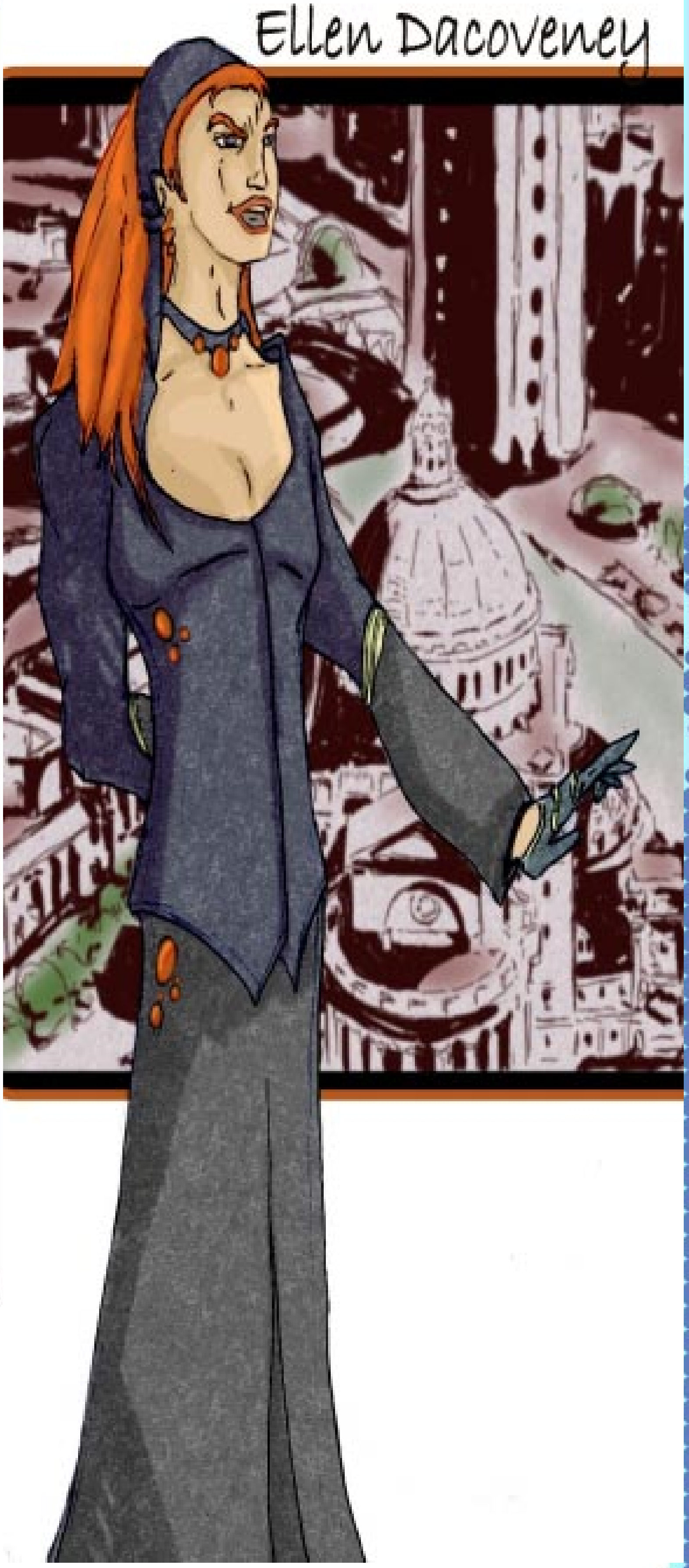
"YES…."

Intangibles: Color Schemes

The two nations are defined by their chosen colors, and their citizens fly their flags proudly. Like a cinematographer, the gamemaster should keep color scheme (not just of characters, but also of background elements) in mind when describing scenes.

The Lifer Nation is a dark, depressed place. They lost the last war and are paying the economic and social price for it. Citizens dress in funeral colors, adopting militaristic and post-Goth styles. Purple in all its hues, is the dominant Lifer color, but other cool colors predominate. Lifer cities are filled with blacks, greys, blues, purples and dingy whites. Lifer art is strong and iconic, resembling the Socialist Realism style of USSR propaganda paintings. Buildings have militaristic and high tech elements. Illumination is harsh and metallic: brick, stone and glasslike or metallic textures are everywhere. Cemeteries and memorial gardens are the only place you see grass or flowers in a Lifer neighborhood.

By contrast, the Choicer Nation is a warm, brightly colored place. They're victorious and optimistic, and their warm color schemes reflect that. The dominant Choicer color is a rich, blood red. Choicer abortion providers have reappropirated the old insult of 'blood on their hands' and made it a badge of honor, a cybernetic mark of courage. Choicer scenes are decorated by warm, autumnal and earthy colors: golds, yellows, oranges, ambers and browns. Choicer art incorporates primitive and art noveau elements, as well as Art Deco touches. Everything Choicer is decorated, and has an ornate, expensive, hand finished patina, including their weapons.



Lifer Combat Styles

The Lifer Nation uses what works, discards what doesn't and when it comes to armed conflict, favors practicality over tradition. Street-level, no-budget dirty tricks are the norm. Lifer soldiers practice a unique breed of martial arts colloquially known as "Rescue Judo", which blends brutal 'hard' styles like Krav Maga and Systema with time tested prison fighting techniques, wrestling and boxing. Rescue Judo isn't pretty, and it'll get you thrown out of any mixed martial arts competition you can name, but it works. Lifer martial artists excel at fighting Choicer cyborgs- many of their combat techniques are designed specifically to take down nanotech enhanced opponents.

Any Lifer-aligned Soldier, Martial Artist or Helix Warrior may add these new combat feats to his or her selection of class-based bonus feat options.

Battle Hardened (General)

Your training includes exposure to non-lethal weapons like tasers, tear gas and combat psionics. As a result of your intense, painful training, you can better resist unpleasant stimuli.

Prerequistes: Base Attack Bonus +1, Great Fortitude

Benefit: When exposed to any stimulus or status ailment that reduces your effectiveness, such as a stun grenade's blinding flash, a fear effect, tear gas's nauseating effects, or similar situations, the duration of the effects are reduced by 50%.

Thus, if you are targeted by any condition that would normally daze you for two rounds, you are only dazed for a single round.

Fearsome Violence (General)

You have honed your terrifying presence on the battlefield, and you know the value of a public execution for cowing the weak-minded. Each life you take only seems to make you more terrifying.

Prerequisite: Frightful Presence

Benefit: Each time you kill a living creature, all opponents within 10 ft of you who clearly witnessed the murder and have fewer levels than you must make a WILL Save (DC 10 + ½ your level + your CHA modifier + the number of opponents you have slain during the encounter).

Each time you kill another creature, the save DC increases by one, and all creatures within range must succeed at a new save. Creatures who fail their save are shaken, suffering a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saves and skill checks equal to 1d6 + your CHA modifier.

If you have the Renown feat, the WILL Save DC is increased by 5.

Normal: Once a creature saves against your Frightful Presence ability, it cannot be affected by the ability for 24 hours.

Rescue Judo (General)

Rescue Judo is a hard martial arts style developed by Lifer elites during the Abortion War. Incorporating elements of Krav Maga and Systema, two styles widely regarded as among the most brutal and deadly martial arts ever devised, Rescue Judo is designed to give unmodified human troops a fighting chance in melee combat with ultra durable cyborgs and Shells.

Rescue Judo emphasizes the study of weak points and mechanical flaws in a system, and teaches the practitioner how to deal maximum damage through any gap in the opponent's formidable defenses.

Prerequistes: Improved Combat Martial Arts, Power Attack, Repair or Knowledge: technology 4 ranks, Base Attack Bonus +5

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on unarmed attack and damage rolls when specifically attacking an External cybernetic implant. Any time you beat a cybernetically enhanced opponent's Defense score by 10 or more points, you destroy one of the cyborgs External devices, chosen at random.

If attacking a heavily armored, high tech target (such as a suit of power armor, military vehicle or cyborg), you may spend an action point to focus your mind and spot hidden weaknesses in the machine's armor. You may ignore a number of points of the target's Hardness or non-magical Damage Resistance equal to 5 + your WIS modifier. (Minimum 5 points ignored). This effect lasts until the end of the encounter.

Scarred Survivor (General)

Your body bears hideous, deep and poorly healed wounds from a hundred desperate battles, but you have survived each one, despite the crippling carnage it inflicts upon you.

Prerequisite: Toughness

Benefit: Any time you are reduced to 0 HP or fewer, you may choose to permanently sacrifice 1d2 points from any one of your attributes. You instantly stabilize and recover 1d4 HP, allowing you a second wind and a chance at survival, but leaving you with lasting and crippling battlefield injuries.

Once you choose to suffer a scarring wound to a particular attribute you may not suffer a wound to that particular attribute again until you have suffered wounds to all five other attributes. Thus, if your first wound is to your INT score, you cannot suffer another voluntary INT wound until you have suffered wounds to all 6 attributes.

Tactical Precision (General)

You can find the weak points in any thing, even the most heavily armored targets and those with anatomies that don't follow the usual rules of logic and biology.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +5, Precise Shot, Spot 8 ranks

Benefit: You can inflict critical hit damage and precision based damage upon creatures normally immune, such as Undead, Constructs, Elementals, fortified cyborgs and some military robots, as well as Lifechained creatures with the Unearthly Durability feat, among others.

Normal: Undead and other exceptionally durable, alien creatures are immune to the extra damage from critical hits and precision based attacks.

White Rose Soldier (General)

The White Rose Banquet has honored the most violent and extreme of Lifer activists since the earliest days of the Army of God. Each January 22nd, the banquet honors those warriors for the preborn who use bullet, bombs and metahuman violence to rather than politics and propaganda to win the War. The banquet honors the most hard line extremists among a culture of activists.

Lifer soldiers decorated with the Cross of the White Rose are capable of shocking acts of brutality, and of turning the tide of battles lesser Lifer soldiers don't have a hope of surviving. These utterly committed warriors for the preborn are America's deadliest shock troops.

Prerequistes: Aligned Zealot, Decorated Veteran, Power Attack, Iron Will, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Knowledge: tactics 1 rank

Benefit: You act with chilling decisiveness and brutality when confronting your Choicer nemesis, gaining strength, speed and unearthly resolve with each kill.

Each intelligent creature with any pro-choice or pagan allegiance, as well as any creature with levels in the Abortion Provider or Neo-Witch Midwife advanced classes (or any similar class) you personally slay provides you with a +1 morale bonus on damage rolls, a +1 improvement on your Initiative result (meaning you get faster as the battle wears on) and 1d4 temporary HP.

These benefits last until the end of the current encounter. Each eligible enemy you kill or destroy increases the benefits. The maximum benefit provided by this feat is +10 to damage rolls, a +10 improvement on Initiative result and +10d4 bonus HP.

Variant Rule: Confirmed Kills

A soldier or assassin builds his reputation one dead target at a time. Sometimes that recognition is formally granted: the best snipers are decorated for their accuracy and high kill-counts, or unofficially: a soldier who breaks an ambush through overwhelming firepower probably won't ever have to buy his own beer for as long as he's serving with the squad he saved. Rules for confirming kills add a grim new dimension to the game, and are a perfect option for a gritty, violent war-story or mercenary campaign. Confirming kills provides players an in-game reward for impressive body counts, just as XP awards provide a meta-game reward.

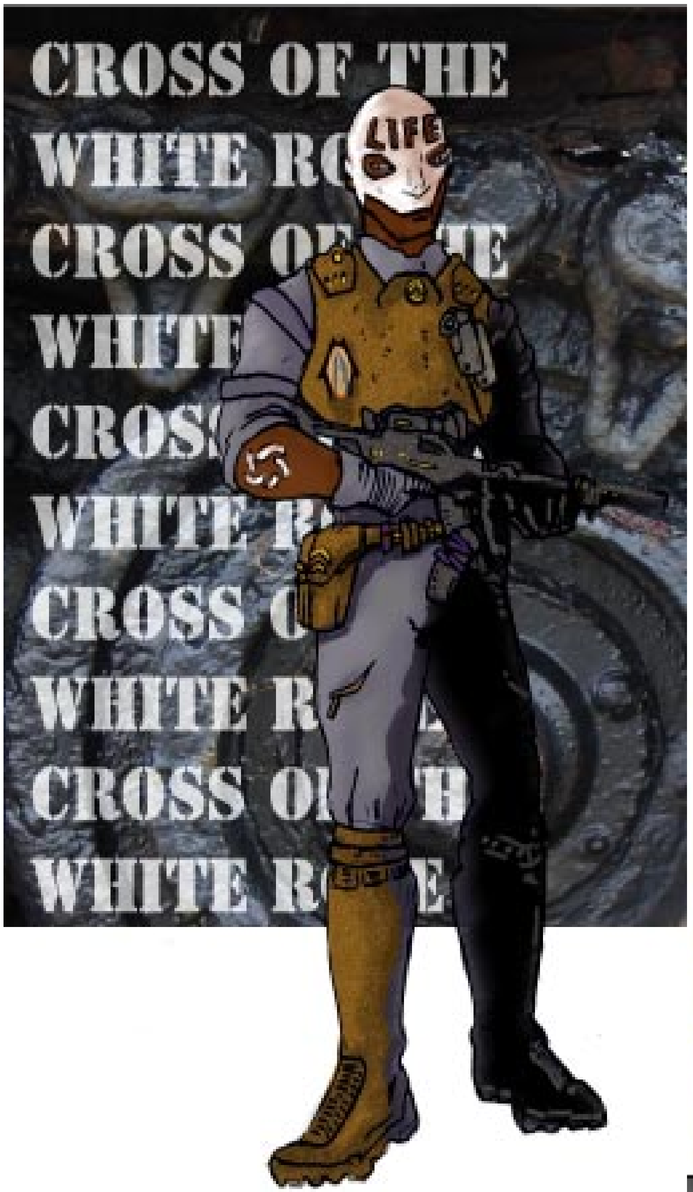
For a kill to be counted as ‘confirmed’, it must be linked back to a specific character. The fatal bullet must be matched to a specific character’s gun, a body must be found near a ‘calling card’ left by the soldier, or a trustworthy third party- such as a sniper’s spotter or a fellow soldier- must testify and confirm the kill. In short, anonymous kills don’t up your kill-count; you must proudly announce your victories.

To this end, many assassins leave a specific calling card behind on their victim’s corpses: some times this is an actual card- such as a specific playing card, Tarot card or even a business card- in other cases, it’s a forensic quirk, the way the body is positioned or a unique post-mortem mutilation.

As you climb the kill-count ladder, you receive the following minor benefits.

If you destroy an occupied military vehicle, you may ‘count’ all the occupants as part of your kill-count. If you kill a target with 50 or more kills to his name, it is counted as 3d6 kills in your favor- you earn a rep more quickly taking out dangerous targets than you do taking out draftees or raw recruits.

An aviator who brings down five or more military aircraft (including power armor or space vehicles) is considered an ace, and receives the benefits of having a 50+ kill count.



Kill Count	Benefit
1 - 50	You receive a +1 bonus to your Reputation score among those who know of your military accomplishments.
51 - 100	You receive a +1 modifier on checks made to requisition equipment from your patron government or backer.
101 - 200	You gain Frightful Presence as a bonus feat even if you do not meet the prerequistes. If you already have this feat, the saving throw against your Frightful Presence increases by +2.
201 - 300	You receive one of the following feats as a bonus feat: Dead Aim, Far Shot, Heroic Surge, Renown, Windfall
300 and above	You receive a bonus on all damage rolls equal to your CHA modifier (minimum +1 bonus); you are one of the most accomplished killers on the planet.

II. Breakfast with the Army

Spring, 2059.
The Kodiak Island Refuge, AK.

The cemetery holds no corpses. It is a purely symbolic place, carved from the black arctic bedrock, a gothic chamber of shadows and fog more than a mile beneath the permafrost layer. Irregular stone shelves are lined with an assortment of tiny tombstones, growing like stone mushrooms. The headstones follow no shape, no plan, and range from simple stone cylinders etched with a simple name and date, to keening angels, their upturned granite faces covered with lime tears. The dead here are all symbols, and one ledge is dedicated exclusively to Arizona's theoretical children: Baby Scarsdale, Baby Phoenix, Baby Sierra Vista, Baby Tucson.....

Gunmetal steel fingers trace the outstretched wing of a stone angel. The star-goddess walks nude through the city of the dead. Her body seems shrunken, pathetically weak outside of her purple and onyx battle armor, and she wraps herself in a voluminous purple cloak. Her deepest wounds have closed leaving only mechanical scars behind, and still the work goes on. Tiny fires are visible within her body as her onboard nano-factory completes her. Yawning system-interface ports line her steel breasts and follow the contours of her pelvis. Link nodes cover her almost skeletal hands, ready to accept her mighty weapons again. She walks slowly, lost in thought.

The metallic woman stands at the edge of shadow and light. She presses her finger tips to the angel's lips and steps into a shaft of dim yellow radiance. Stone chips fall from the angel's lips and dance in the light.

The star-goddess leaves her lonely vigil at the bodiless graveyard, and stands at military attention before a great stained glass window cut into the rock. A matte black titanium frame is welded to resemble a simplified version of the Virgin of Guadalupe, vastly simplified hands folded in prayer. The metallic woman wraps her cloak tighter around herself and stares into the endless, roiling factory floor below.

Hundreds of people move with a single purpose, their multicolored safety gear giving a clue as to their purpose. They move like the flight crew on an aircraft carrier deck, human automatons running at combat speed. Robotic assembly units weld mammoth chest plates together, while expert humans rivet on sleek plasma display screens, decorating the armor in television. Atomic batteries slide into the recessed engines built into power armor spinal plating, rotating to lock into place with synchronized clicks. Completed Shells, purple and massive, are curled like gestating fetuses in transparent storage pods moving along the cavern's ceiling.

The American Abortion War was still gestating, and the future was fat with possibilities, but the labor pains were beginning. The Army was almost ready for war.

Boston, MA.

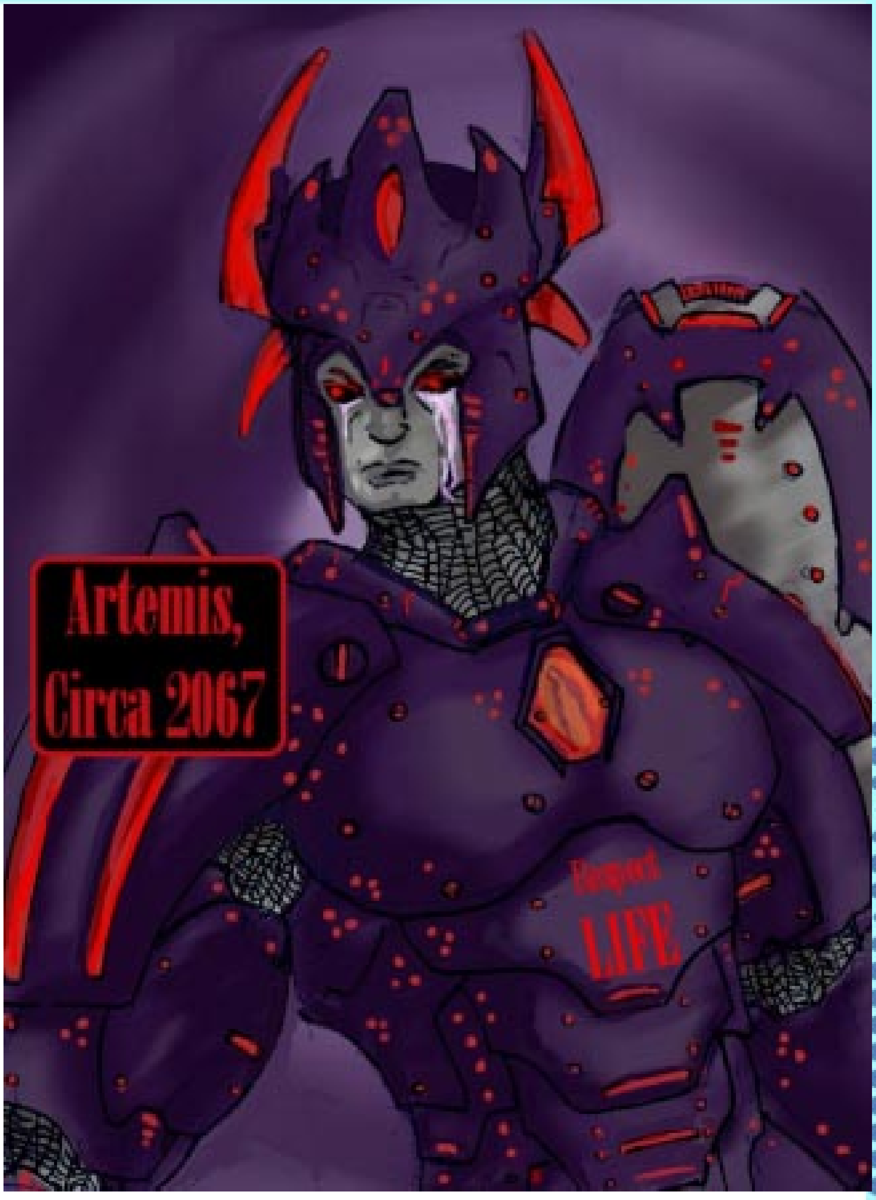
Thirty-six hundred miles away, the first commander in chief of the Army raises the black plastic fork and its dripping pancake cargo to her lips and wolfs it down with a single gulp. Smartlight data-windows float just beneath her eye level, bringing her the secrets of the world, answering her every question before she aks, but Ellen ignores them. She concentrates seriously on breakfast, gesturing emphatically with the disposable fork as she speaks, "And how is our patient this morning, boys?"

Ellen eats fast and without shame, wiping her lips with a paper napkin, her every move confident and powerful. Ellen sits at the head of a chrome and glass conference table, the financial and theological queen of all she surveys. A lethal woman carved from translucent orange *polymer stands behind her, her clothes as elegant as her mistress' and her posture calm. Dawn refracts through the orange-plastic guardian, strange organelles visible within the serene bodyguard. Ellen is cold and hard, immaculate in a Lifer-cut business suit, her belly round and potent beneath her. The desperate, emotional woman from the rooftop is gone, if she ever really existed at all.*

She gets her answer as she takes another huge bite of pancakes.

"The xeno-cyborg has recovered almost completely from its injuries; its nano-foundries are centuries ahead of our best self-repair systems. The damage it sustained was... gigantic, but -"

Ellen points with her fork, using the little utensil like a hunting spear, " 'She' , Franklin. She's one of us now, and deserves our respect."



The man who spoke takes his mild rebuke without further comment, and picks at his plastic plate full of scrambled eggs half-heartedly. The speaker is an Arab man, well dressed in the Lifer fashion of the day, and his eyes glow like blue suns, occasionally crackling with quiet fire. He takes a bite of eggs, and gestures with his own fork, almost fencing with his mistress, "She than. The problem isn't the xeno-cyborg's body, though. She's unbelievably powerful, possibly a match even for Ultimate and more than a match for any of the known Choicer ops. Physically, she's everything I could have ever wanted… more."

The Lifer high command is assembled for breakfast. Even post-human, cybernetically enhanced and gene-cut terrorists need to eat, and they decide the fate of America over the pleasant non-taste of McDonalds. They are a collection of regal men and women in sleek, black and purple business attire. They radiate wealth, power, military excellence. There are half-gods mixed in with the human leaders, metahuman warriors in somber battle guard; like Ellen, the assembled men and women have each brought their bodyguards and their seconds.

Across the table, her steel toed boots propped up on the glass, a woman who looks more biker-dyke than televangelist speaks, curt and practical as always, "So what the fuck is the problem, Emir?"

"The problem is her mind. She's broken, Ellen. If she were human, I'd say she was the

worst case of post traumatic stress disorder and combat psychosis I've ever seen. She's virtually catatonic, and on the rare occasions she actually does decide to speak to me....."

The Arab man leans back in his comfortable leather chair, and sighs heavily. He taps the side of his forehead twice. Half enjoying his discomfort, the butch woman at the far end of the table smirks into her Styrofoam cup of coffee. Unlike the others, she's dressed in black jeans and a black t-shirt with the stenciled white word "GHOST" across her muscular breasts.

"....she reveals bits and pieces of the most disturbing delusional architecture I've ever encountered. I'm actually afraid to enter her mind, Ellen. The thing she's saying make no sense. Nothing living can be that old, that- "

Ellen raises a delicate eyebrow and wipes her lips. She pushes her breakfast tray away from her and rises. She rests her weight on the glass table. Instinctively, the orange skinned woman behind Ellen also adjusts her position, sunlight streaming through her almost-skull, refracting through her occipital cavity, so that she always stands between her charge and the chamber's huge windows.

"I know it's difficult to credit, but she is every second as old as she claims."

And someone at the back of the chamber chokes hard, and the room erupts into brief chatter. Everyone talks excitedly at once, their worldviews completely altered. The butch woman in the ghost t-shirt drums her fingers on the table, lost in thought. One of the assembled commanders blurts out, "Christ, she's- she's not exactly what any of us expected the Second Comin' to look like, El."

Ellen smiles wryly, pausing before the office's massive window wall. The city of Boston is awakening nearly a mile beneath the council chamber. Traffic captors and combat air patrols dominate an early morning sky color of magma.

Ellen laughs hard, once, "She is a messiah in the literal sense, someone anointed as our liberator, our holy warrior. She's also exactly the force multiplier we've dreamed of for nearly a decade. There's a good chance she may be the most powerful creature on planet right now. Can you imagine what we can accomplish with her leading our forces?"

The butch Lifer woman shoots out an accusing finger. The scarred, muscular woman doesn't look happy, doesn't look convinced

"I'm imagining something outta a fucking horror movie if she flips out on us completely. If she snaps.....do we have anything that can kill it? A nuke, anti-matter, anything? If she's as nuts as Emir says..... personally I don't trust the thing to lead a pizza run, much less the Army of God."

Ellen Dacoveney clenches her fist. A pair of silver hoop bracelets slide down her arm, clinking softly under her jacket sleeve. The faint tracings of old scar tissue mar the underside of her delicate, pale wrist. She takes a breath, two, three, before turning to address the question on the table.

"My life is no secret. It's public knowledge before I found this organization I attempted suicide four times. My liver and kidneys are cyber-sys replacements thanks to my final attempt at death. I was, I admit fully now, every bit as 'broken' as she is."

"The Choicers brushed me aside. I didn't exist to them, but the movement.... it gave me purpose. I found a reason to live, a reason to keep waking up and fighting. All because a deeply faithful man had faith in me. No one in our movement talked of imprisoning me, or finding a way to kill me."

The butch woman sneers, pantomiming a gun pointed at her rival.

"Fucking pretty sentiment, but I bet you didn't have thermonuclear capacity. Confused

white trash and sociopath space gods are two very different animals."

And Ellen's voice goes the quiet-cold it does anytime she prepares to give a killing order, the voice of a righteous judge speaking a sentence

"And because of her unique gifts, we should murder her before she becomes a threat to us. You would have made a wonderful Choicer, Ghost Boss."

The two women face each other down across the table, angry reflections in the glass. Instinctively the orange skinned protector positions herself between the two, ready to kill Ghost Boss at the slightest provocation.

"I don't disagree that her mind is badly damaged, nor that some of what she's told me is terrifying beyond imagining. But I've never encountered a soul so desperate.... so utterly alone. She's seeking a reason to keep existing, just like I did."

Ellen gestures to the nanotech laced air and the boardroom lights dim. Twin holograms of the cyborg's armor rotate slowly above the table. The clockwise hologram details the creature's massive injuries, while the counter-clockwise hologram depicts a pristine warrior at the height of her power.

"She's the product of a technology millennia more advanced than we're ready to deal with. Over the last three months, we've watched her body repair itself, grow whole new components, perform feats that casually violate at a half dozen major laws of physics. We've trimmed nearly three decades off our R&D timeline just by observing her...... now, let me ask you something. Are any of you stupid enough to believe that her mind is any less resilient than her body?"

Ellen walks slowly around the table, the alien bodyguard is never more than four steps from her. Ellen lifts her eyes, and stares into the face of the rotating hologram of the alien warrior. Than her cold eyes cut back down, staring down each of her cabinet members, each of her apostles, in turn.

"I'm under no illusions. Even if I had never met her, she would have recovered from what happened in time. Decades or centuries, or even millennia from now; the time frame isn't important to her. What is important is that even without our intervention, sooner or later, she will be sane again. She will be ready to make war again."

Ellen walks past Ghost Boss, intentionally ignoring the hate in the other woman's eyes. Everyone else around the table turns to watch the slow prowl across the table, watching a duel take place without a single overt act of violence.

"We've got the chance here to choose what form her mind's going to take. To shape the spiritual evolution of a deity. To make sure that she grows up to be a good little pro-life goddess."

Ellen locks eyes with Ghost Boss, and shocking herself, Ghost Boss can't meet her empress' eyes.

"Isn't that worth any risk? Any risk at all?"

A pause, twisting the knife just a little farther.

"She's going to carry our banner to the stars."

Ghost Boss finally, grudgingly nods. Satisfied, Ellen moves to the other side of the table. The butch Lifer general half turns to face the woman she's reluctantly sworn to obey.

"She's already making amazing strides, just in the few short times I've spoken to her. She's completely accepted our credo, and has even asked to be baptized a Christian. She asks about the boy every time I see her- a being that old and powerful asking about my baby like a hockey mom. Tactically, her mind's off the scale. She's already devoured our military, historical and technological databases, and is working her way through our anthropology files....."

Boston, MA
The Lifer Nation

Ellen smiles and wiggles her two last fingers, and the room-AI responds. A new hologram takes shape. A simple, cartoony image of a Greek huntress, her bow held taught before her. A star map of the constellation Orion is superimposed over the image of the divine huntress. The general is curious, as are they all.

"Which brings us our final point before we move on to new business. She's chosen a name for herself. Now, while I'm all sure we all expected something from Christian history-"

Quiet laughter around the table, from everyone except Ghost Boss.

"We'll be referring to her as "ARTEMIS" from this point forward, after the Greek goddess of childbirth... and the hunt. I trust none of you have any problem with the symbolism behind that choice?"

Ellen smiles big, half-wondering if her assistants brought her a second platter of pancakes, "Now, let's talk recruitment…."

Lifer Object Philosophies

Lifer Object Philosophies are utterly modern creations. Unlike Choicer Philosophies, which mimic ancient pagan beliefs and superstition, the Lifer Philosophies emerged on the battlefield. Each Philosophy is designed in response to a battlefield need, usually as a counter to some particularly successful Choicer tactic or Powered adversary. Lifers Philosophies are designed to be terrifying, gruesome and visually impressive; the death-fixed Lifer military is definitely not subtle.

Object Philosophies and Allegiance

Object Philosophies are an outward manifestation of a hero's willpower and master of post-human mental discipline. The power granted by a Philosophy comes from within, and isn't granted by a judgmental deity, or any other outside force. Though a character's allegiance and background certainly shapes what Philosophies she studies and manifests, nothing but tradition prevents a Choicer character from learning Lifer Philosophies or vice versa. Likewise, if a character defects or changes allegiances she can still manifest all previously mastered Philosophies. Of course, whether the character chooses to do so is another matter….

Anti-Evolutionist (Object Philosophy)

You reject the doctrine of evolution, and are secure in your knowledge of the perfection of the human design. Your beliefs give you strength when confronting genetic abominations.

Prerequisite: Knowledge: theology &

philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to your WIS modifier (minimum once daily), when attacking a Lifechain, a creature with the Psionic subtype or any other genetically altered metahuman, you may add ½ your ranks in Knowledge: theology & philosophy (maximum +10 bonus) on damage rolls against the creature. You must declare the use of this Philosophy before rolling damage.

Special: You may not select this feat if you are Lifechained, or if you possess Gene Feats. If involuntarily altered later, you do not lose access to this feat.

Armor of the Preborn (Object Philosophy)

You can solidify a carapace of psionic energy around yourself, forming a suit of ectoplasm harder than granite. In reflection of your beliefs and obsession, your stone-like carapace is carved with terrifying fetal images: torn infants and shredded fetal tissue, dead cherubs and mutilated babies. Your Lifer heritage is carved in low-relief upon your psionic armor.

Prerequisite: Frightful Presence, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, CHA 15+

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum three times per day), you can wrap the armor of the preborn around yourself. Manifesting the terrifying, gargoyle-like armor is a standard action.

Your armor provides a +10 equipment bonus to Defense, and has Damage Reduction equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum DR 2/-). This DR stacks with DR from other sources, such as Tough hero class levels, but not with DR provided by other types of armor.

While wearing this super heavy armor, your base land speed is reduced to 20 ft, if it is greater. You suffer a –6 armor check penalty, and your max DEX bonus to Defense is +1. You can maintain your armor for a number of minutes equal to your CHA score, or dismiss it as a free action.

If you use your Frightful Presence feat while armored, the WILL Save's DC is increased by +5.

Defenseless Hands (Object Philosophy)

You have tattooed your body with small handprints, a symbol of your hatred of the 'tiny hands stilled by abortion' and living symbol of your commitment to the Lifer ethos. You can touch your symbols and focus your will to the point your thoughts become a weapon. Your presence and passion weakens the defenses of the Choicers you hunt.

Prerequisites: Meaningful Ink, Iron Will, Concentration 8 ranks, Knowledge: theology and philosophy 8 ranks

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one plus your WIS modifier (minimum twice daily), you can touch your defenseless hand tattoos (or the armor covering them) and awaken your latent psionic gifts. Doing so is a move equivalent action, which does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Your tattoos glow with a cold bluish-white inner light, brilliant enough to be seen through most clothing and armor, making you clearly visible in darkness, and shedding light like a halogen flood.

Once this power is activated, you radiate a psi-energy field shaped by your beliefs, which can skew probabilities in your favor. This energy field lasts a number of rounds equal to your WIS moodier (minimum one round). During this time, any creature with a pro-choice or similar allegiance, as well as anyone who has ever had or preformed an abortion who comes within 60 ft of you has suffers a morale penalty on their Defense score and all saving throws equal to one plus your WIS modifier (minimum –2 modifier).

Direct Action Ghost (Object Philosophy)

You're a hardliner, uncompromising warrior for the pre-born. Your training includes identifying and emotionally emphasizing with a theoretical "Baby Unborn" to the point you can reach a zen-like state of non-thought, where you submerge your conscious mind and act without deliberation.

You can focus your consciousness entirely on the mission at hand to the point that for a few vital, tactically all-important seconds, your physical body seems to vanish. When you're deployed on a mission no locked door, no Choicer force dome, no defense will keep you out.

Prerequisite: Soldier Name, Iron Will, Concentration 12 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: For extremely brief periods of time, thanks to your Philosophical training and sheer willpower you can become intangible. You can become incorporeal for a number of rounds per day equal to your total character level plus your ranks in Knowledge: theology & philosophy.

You may become intangible as a free action, and can maintain your ghostly state for as long as you desire, up to your maximum limits. You always must spend at least one round intangible once this power is activated.

While incorporeal, your unarmed and melee attacks ignore natural and equipment bonuses to Defense. While incorporeal, you can float effortlessly. You gain a flight speed of 20 ft (clumsy), but you may hover in place.

Dying of Choice (Object Philosophy)

You sculpt your hatred of abortion and drive for vengeance like a physical object. Through an act of will you can create a telepathic virus, a nightmare of bloody, ragged fetal images and guilt. You unleash your psi-virus upon on unsuspecting Choicer forces, transforming guilt and emotional trauma into a psychic disease which promises insanity and death.

Prerequisites: Aligned Zealot, Iron Will, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 8 ranks, Craft: visual arts 1 rank

Benefit: An intense period of directed meditation and concentration allows you 'write' an empathic virus which uses propaganda images and nightmarish Lifer theology to drive Choicers, particularly anyone who has ever undergone or preformed an abortion, incurably insane.

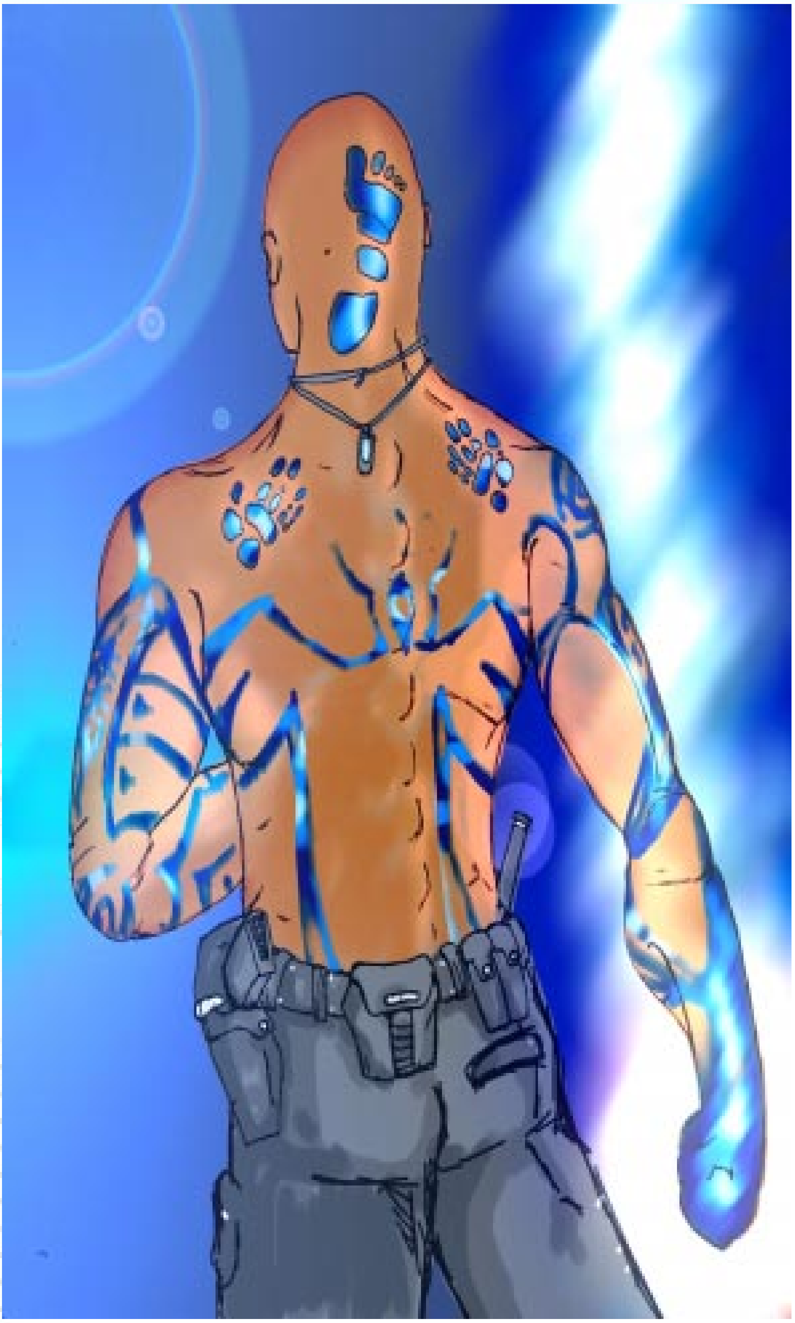
A number of times per day equal to your CHA modifier (minimum once daily), you can create a psychic virus as a full round action which provokes attacks of opportunity. Once a thought-virus is created, you can store the virus within your consciousness for a number of minutes equal to your WIS modifier.

GHOST
METHOD

During this time, you can unleash the psi-virus as a standard action, infecting the mind of a single eligible target with an INT score of 5+. Doing so requires you to make eye contact with a victim, who must be within 30 ft of you and clearly able to see you. The victim must succeed at a WILL Save (DC 10 + ½ your character level + your CHA modifier) or contract a damaging, artificially generated mental illness.

Only creatures with a pro-choice or similar ethos as an allegiance can be affected by this ability. If the initial victim has undergone or preformed an abortion, all WILL Save DCs associated with the psi-virus are increased by +5. Mindless creatures, as well as those immune to mind influencing or fear effects are immune to this feat.

If the victim fails the save, she falls victim to a mental disease. She immediately suffers 1d4 points of temporary WIS and CHA damage. Each day she



must succeed at an additional WILL Save at the same DC or suffer 1d3 points of permanent WIS and CHA damage. Two consecutive WILL saves are required to 'break' the mental fever and end the psychic disease.

While the victim is suffering ongoing damage from this psychic disease, she is a 'carrier' and can spread the psionic virus. Any eligible target who makes eye contact with the initial victim must save against the psi-virus or be similarly affected. This save is at the same DC of the initial victim's save -5. Secondary victims of the thought virus cannot spread the virus further.

False Beast Mark (Object Philosophy)

The Evangelical Christian culture that gave birth to the Lifer movement dislikes and distrusts the omnipresent surveillance culture of mainstream America, particularly the ID Wallet chips that most modern citizens are implanted with at birth.

To those living in the Lifer ghettos, these ubiquitous nano-chips are the prophesized "Mark of the Beast, without which no man may buy or sell". Lifer neighborhoods are one of the last places in 22nd century America where shoppers still carry cash. Mastery of this Philosophy is a way for citizens of the embattled Lifer Enclaves to maintain their economic independence.

Prerequisites: Lifer, Enclave or any conservative Christian allegiance, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks.

Benefit: You can focus your will and tap your latent psychokinetic talents, using prayer and faith to reshape your flesh. With a successful Knowledge: theology & philosophy check, which requires a full round action, you can manifest the distinctive scar of an ID Wallet nano-chip. Once an ID is manifested, it remains in place until you take a full round action to change the ID or dissolve it completely.

The false nano-chip can be read by conventional police scanners, effectively having a Forgery check result equal to your Knowledge: theology & philosophy check result. You determine the ID on the chip, and your latent psi-talent creates a convincing alternate ID of an average (fictional) citizen, designed not to arouse suspicion.

Once per day, you can use the false ID Wallet to make any single purchase with a Purchase DC of 10 or less. You cannot purchase items with any Restriction rating when using your False Beast Mark.

Gideon's Touch (Object Philosophy)

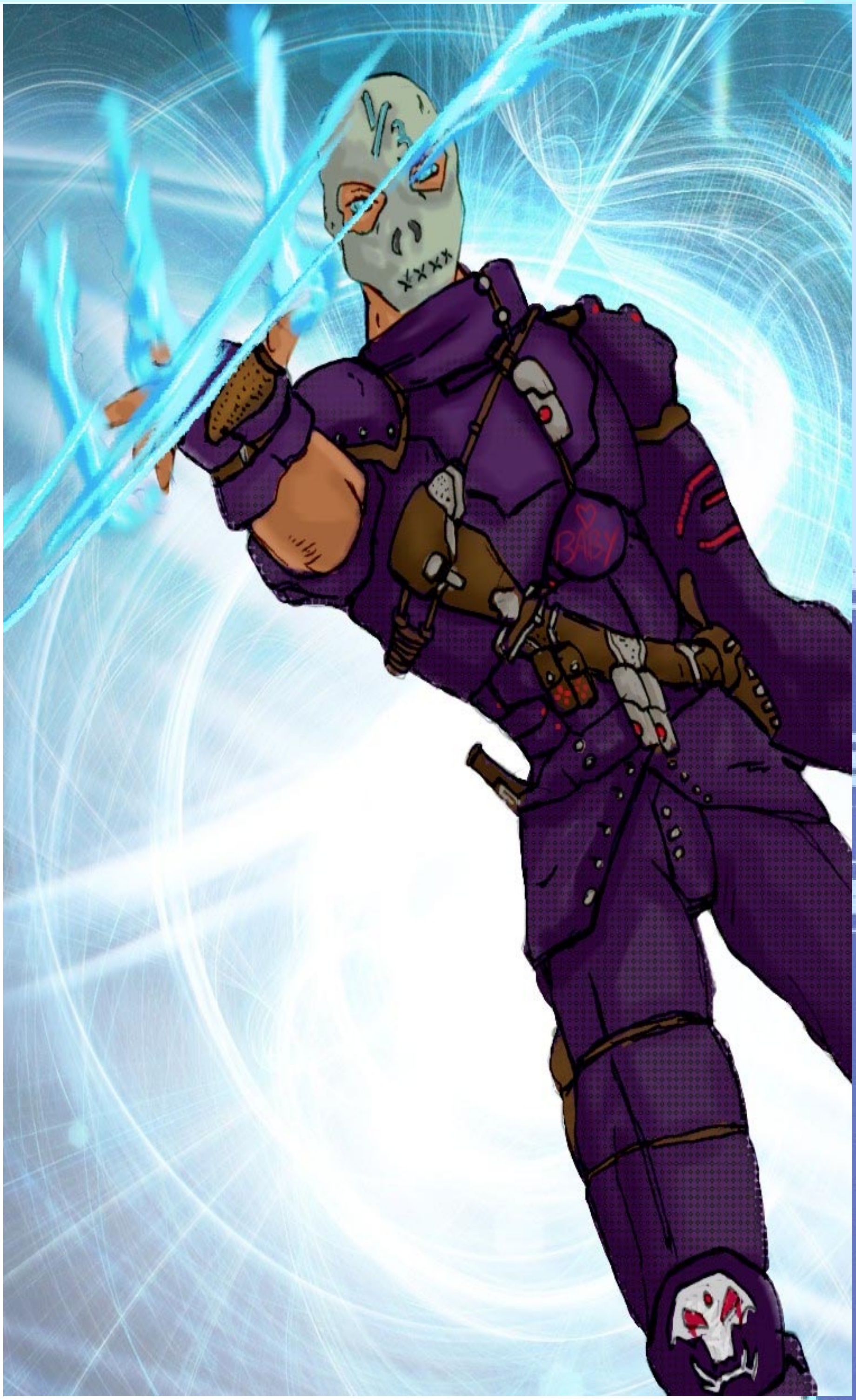
Like Gideon at Jericho, your faith and strange post-human talents allow you to bring down the otherwise impenetrable energized walls protecting Choicer abortion clinics.

Prerequisite: Metaphysical Padlock

Benefit: Your faith, shaped by will and righteous fury have allowed you to leech away the energy powering a Choicer force dome (or any other forcefield based on similar principles). By touching any clinic force dome, or similar ablative forcefield, you suck away its power, transforming the artificial telekinetic energy matrix into the raw stuff of life itself.

Each round you maintain contact, you drain the forcefield of a number of Hit Points equal to 1d8+ your CHA modifier. If you are wounded, you recover an equivalent number of hit points. Excess healing is transformed into temporary hit points, which fade within 1 minute. If you absorb more than twice your starting hit points as temporary HP, your body explodes from within, unable to handle the massive influx of energy pouring through it.

Rather than directly benefiting from the healing yourself, you may transfer the healing energy stolen from the force dome to any creature you are touching. Each round, you may choose to provide healing to a touched creature, or use the energy yourself.



Ghostburn (Object Philosophy)

Your intangible state agitates the molecules of anything you pass through, weakening molecular structure through intense (if shortlived) heat and static electrical discharges.

Prerequisite: Direct Action Ghost

Benefit: While incorporeal, all your melee attacks inflict an additional +2d6 points of energy damage, half of which is fire damage, half of which is electrical. damage. Even a casual touch inflicts damage while you are in your burning wraith state.

Ghost Shooter (Object Philosophy)

You have honed your powers of concentration and will to the point you can maintain the ghostliness of any ranged weapons you fire, at least until their bullets and blasts strike and kill their target.

Prerequisite: Direct Action Ghost

Benefit: While incorporeal, you can maintain concentration on a bullet or energy blast until it strikes its target. By phasing the round in and out of reality until the moment of impact you allow your ranged attack to ignore natural and equipment bonuses to Defense.

Normal: While incorporeal, your ranged attacks function normally.

Ghoulish Reminder (Object Philosophy)

You are a living testament to the pain and horror of abortion, and with a thought, you can burn away your scarred and living flesh, revealing the horribly scarred bones (and damaged psyche) beneath the skin.

Prerequisites: Living Witness or Morbid Speculation, Frightful Presence, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Concentration 4 ranks

Benefit: Once per day, you can undergo a terrifying transformation. Your skin is flooded with strange psychoactive chemicals which seem to melt away pigment. Your skin becomes greenish-grey and corpselike and your skeleton and internal organs are faintly visible within your body.

Your touch can suck away life and hope, like a wraiths. With a successful touch attack, you can inflict negative levels upon your enemies. Most creatures touched by you suffer a negative level, but any sentient creature with a pro-choice allegiance or who has ever had or preformed an abortion suffers two negative levels.

Multiple touches are cumulative, and a creature reduced to zero level/ Hit Dice dies. The FORT Save DC to remove the negative level is 10 + ½ your total character level + your CHA modifier.

Each negative level you inflict heals you for 5 HP. Excess healing is gained as temporary hit points, which vanish when this effect ends.

You maintain your ghoulish state for a number of rounds equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum two rounds). You cannot voluntarily end this transformed state prior to the effect's duration lapses. All touches, including casual or friendly contact, you make during this time are potentially lethal.

Guardian Halo (Object Philosophy)

You with draw into yourself, using specially designed Pro-Life meditations to focus your will into a protective, telekinetic cocoon. A ring of brilliant white light surrounds you, protecting you from your enemies at the same time the light of purity weakens their resolve.

Prerequisite: Aligned Zealot, Morbid Speculation, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum twice daily), you can focus your will and call your guardian halo into being. Doing so is a free action.

The guardian halo is an effect similar to a *shield* spell. It is a rotating halo of force which blocks *magic missiles*, incorporeal and force attacks. It provides a +4 bonus to Defense. Your guardian halo remains in effect for a number of minutes equal to your total character level.

Any creature with a pro-choice or similar allegiance, as well as anyone who ever had or preformed an abortion who looks directly into the ring must succeed at a WILL Save (DC 12 + your CHA modifier) or considered *shaken* for the duration of the halo's effect, and for 1d6 rounds there after.

Those who fall victim to this mind-influencing effect are distracted by ghostly voices screaming hate filled psalms, the screams of newborns, and disturbing fetal-gore hallucinations.

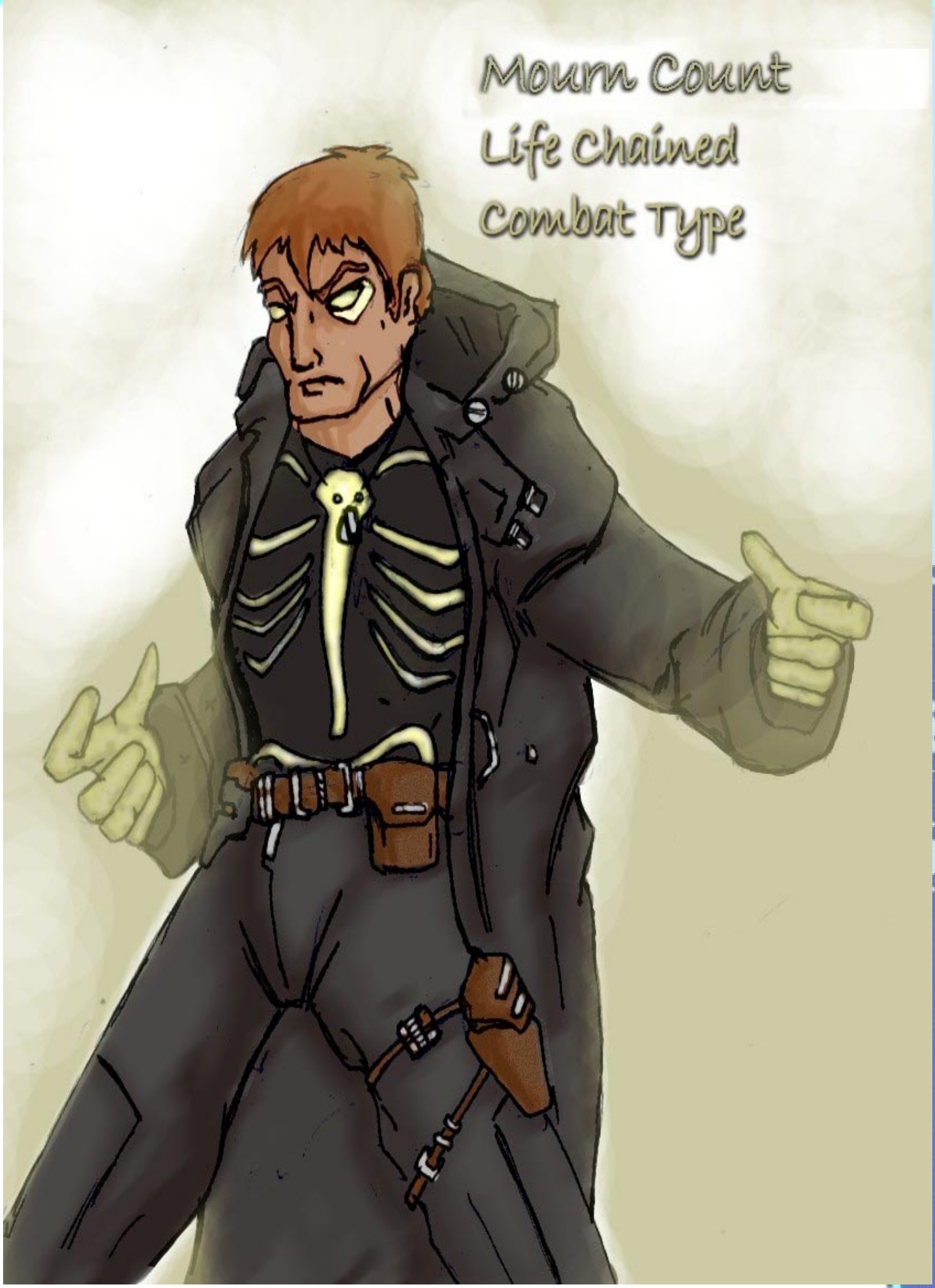
Life From Death (Object Philosophy)

Purely through the strength of your faith, through the power of the God you worship, you can return the dead to life…. And create a new human life where there was none before.

Prerequisites: Faith Healer, Iron Will, Morbid Speculation, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 12 ranks, Treat Injury 4 ranks

Benefit: Once per day, you may touch a dead body which can have been dead for no more than 24 hours, and raise that person or creature from the dead. This effect is effectively identical to the divine spell raise dead.

In addition, as a consequence of your beliefs, you can transform fetal remains into a living human or humanoid creature. The resulting 'raised' creature is a Neverborn human child, which takes its physical appearance and extra-normal abilities (if any) from the raw genetic material of the remains, and is imbued with a soul based upon your own, using your expectations, beliefs and desires as rough template. A creature created from Lifechained remains is itself Lifechained, and the Neverborn possess all the genetic alterations passed down to it by its parents.



You may create a Neverborn anywhere in the child or young adult age category; the creature appears with knowledge and intellect equal to a child of its apparent age, using information and emotional experiences drawn from your own memories. The child initially shares your allegiances and is friendly towards you, but as a sentient creature eventually form its own beliefs and desires. When created, a Neverborn does not have any memories or knowledge not drawn from your own; in short, your Neverborn offspring does not know anything you don't.

You are exhausted after using this ability.

Player Species: The Neverborn Medium Lifechained Undead (Late PL 7)

"Only half the patients who go into an abortion clinic come out alive."
-Traditional Lifer maxim

The Neverborn are an undead strain of humanity, a tiny species created by the unique intersection of pro-life belief and powerful necromantic object philosophies. Neverborn are awakened to sentience and returned to a kind of life during a mournful ritual.

Neverborn are an artificially created species unique to the Lifer nation, and Neverborn children are often raised alongside their living and breathing siblings in the movement. The Neverborn are virtually unknown outside of Megachurch Enclaves. Many outsiders consider the Neverborn an urban legend, and dismiss the species as just another piece of Lifer propaganda.

Able to testify first hand to the horrors of abortion, the Neverborn are powerful speakers and sidewalk consolers, and have become a secret weapon in the pro-life movement's propaganda arsenal. The Neverborn are a relatively new species, with fewer than 2000 members of their kind world-wide. The vast majority of Neverborn have chosen to remain on Earth, and are active participants in the Abortion War.

The very few Neverborn who have ventured off planet describe a sense of freedom and purpose among the stars, an almost instinctive drive to venture into the heart of the galaxy, deep into Lifechain territory.

***Legal Status:** The Supreme Court has recognized the sentience and essential humanity of the Neverborn, but do not believe the creature's existence outweighs the right to legal abortion, citing psychological and quantum physical evidence indicating that Neverborn fetuses and fetal tissue are not in themselves sentient until acted upon by an outside force- in this case someone who has mastered the Life from Death Philosophy.*

Player Species: Neverborn

For the purposes of inheritance law and parental rights, the Neverborn are considered the offspring of the person who 'created them', with the undead creature's biological parents having abandoned all parental rights and responsibilities. This decision is consistent with decisions made in cases of creatures that reproduce asexually or via high-tech, unconventional means of conception.

***Appearance:** Neverborn resemble the humans they would have grown to be. As undead pseudo-creatures, they are cool to the touch, with* *skins that match the ambient air temperature. Neverborn have bloodshot eyes, usually with dark circles under them, this trait has more to do with their sleepless, nightmare haunted slumber than it does a quirk of their creation.*

Occasionally, the Neverborn undergo a horrifying transformation.

When within 30 ft of anyone who has ever had or preformed an abortion, the Neverborn's undead nature becomes more apparent: their pale, ice cold bodies are marked by saline burns or ragged surgical scars. Purple and crimson lividity marks decorate their grey-white bodies like obscene tattoos. In this state, a Neverborn cannot easily hide what it is. Some appear almost translucent, as if they are carved from deeply scarred amber.

***Reproduction:** Neverborn are an artificially created, sterile species. The undead can enjoy sex for pleasure, but many suffer crippling emotional problems, which makes relationships between Neverborn and mortals difficult at best.*

Neverborn cannot conceive a child without supernatural or high-tech assistance. Female Neverborn are physiologically incapable of bringing a child to term, but could theoretically produce offspring in an exo-womb or by other artificial methods.

***Names:** Neverborn names follow human naming conventions, particularly the naming conventions of American Lifer society. Many are referred to as "Baby" well into their teens and adulthood.*

***Spot Check DC:** DC 20. Neverborn resemble the humans they would have grown up to be when 'disguised'. The Spot DC drops to DC 8 when within 30 ft of anyone who has ever undergone or preformed an abortion, due to the horrible stigmata the undead creatures manifest.*

***Size:** Neverborn are size Medium. As Medium creatures, Neverborn receive no special bonus or penalties due to their size. A Neverborn's base land speed is 30 ft. Neverborn height and weight is in line with natural-born human norms.*

***Ability Score Modifiers:** +4 WIS, -2 CHA. A Neverborn's intimate connection to death, its subconscious pseudo-memories of the womb, and politicized fantasizes the life before life give it a profound wisdom and unshakable will. Neverborn are the quintessential unwanted outsiders, and many are emotional cripples thanks to their strange origin. As undead creatures, Neverborn do not have a CON score.*

***Racial Skills:** Neverborn receive a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Knowledge: civics and Knowledge: theology & philosophy checks. They are raised to be politically active pro-life advocates with an intimate grasp of the universe's theological underpinnings.*

Neverborn receive a +1 racial bonus on all Knowledge checks made concerning the Lifechain or the creatures of Phallus space. In some unknown way, the necromantic object philosophies that created these creatures draw on the power of the Lifechain.

***Racial Feats:** All Neverborn gain the Living Witness feat as a racial bonus feat, reflecting the guerilla-debate tactics they are indoctrinated in from early childhood, and their instinctive understanding of the best way to parley their undead nature into votes.*

***Enhanced Senses:** Neverborn are outsiders, existing at the edge of human society. They are creatures of shadows, and have night vision as keen as any other unwanted stray. All Neverborn have lowlight vision and darkvision with a 60 ft range.*

***Undead Nature (EX):** As undead, the Neverborn have no Constitution score, and are immune to poison, sleep, fatigue, paralysis, stunning, disease, the sickened condition, death effects, energy drain, and necromantic effects. Neverborn are not subject to subdual damage, stunning or to critical hits. The Neverborn are* *immune to any effect requiring a FORT save, unless the effect also works on objects. In this case the Neverborn makes a WILL save at the same DC.*

However, the Neverborn do not automatically receive the Undead type's D12 hit die; an Neverborn's hit die is determined by its character class.

Like all undead, the Neverborn is healed by negative energy and injured by healing magic. Neverborn do not heal naturally

As sentient beings, the Neverborn do not share the typical undead immunity to mind-influencing effects. However, Neverborn are immune to fear and fear based mental attacks.

Racial Weaknesses: *Neverborn are vulnerable to divine turning (if such character types are allowed in the campaign), and to any spell or bane weapon that specifically targets undead. However, a Neverborn is immune to the turning attempts of any cleric with a pro-choice or similar allegiance, or any cleric who has ever undergone or preformed an abortion.*

The Neverborn is destroyed when it reaches 0 HP, not merely incapacitated. Neverborn cannot be raised, and resurrection only works if the creature is willing. A resurrected Neverborn returns to life as a true human, losing all racial traits and special abilities, but retaining all class features.

The Neverborn's creation binds these half-dead humanoids indirectly to the Lifechain. For the purposes of 'predatory' Lifechain feats, such as Lifechain Primacy, all Neverborn are considered to be Lifechain creatures with a single Lifechained Feat.

Those Neverborn who explore their heritage and select the Awakened Heritage feat are considered to possess at least two Lifechain feats, or more if they master other Lifechained super abilities.

Many Tongues (Object Philosophy)

When possessed what some call the Holy Spirit and what others call the higher self, you can speak any language known to man or alien.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank

Benefit: Each day, you gain the ability to define a number of languages you speak and read without any formal training. You may grant yourself the temporary ability to either Speak or Read/Write a number of languages equal to your ranks in Knowledge: theology & philosophy. You are treated as being a native speaker of the chosen languages until you next sleep.

You may choose to declare some or all your daily assortment of Philosophy-derived languages when you first awaken, or you may choose to wait until you are confronted by an unfamiliar language. You can designate a language as a free action. This ability works on all human and alien languages, though gives you no ability to understand non-intelligent creatures, understand computer or machine languages, or to break codes or ciphers.

Metaphysical Padlock (Object Philosophy)

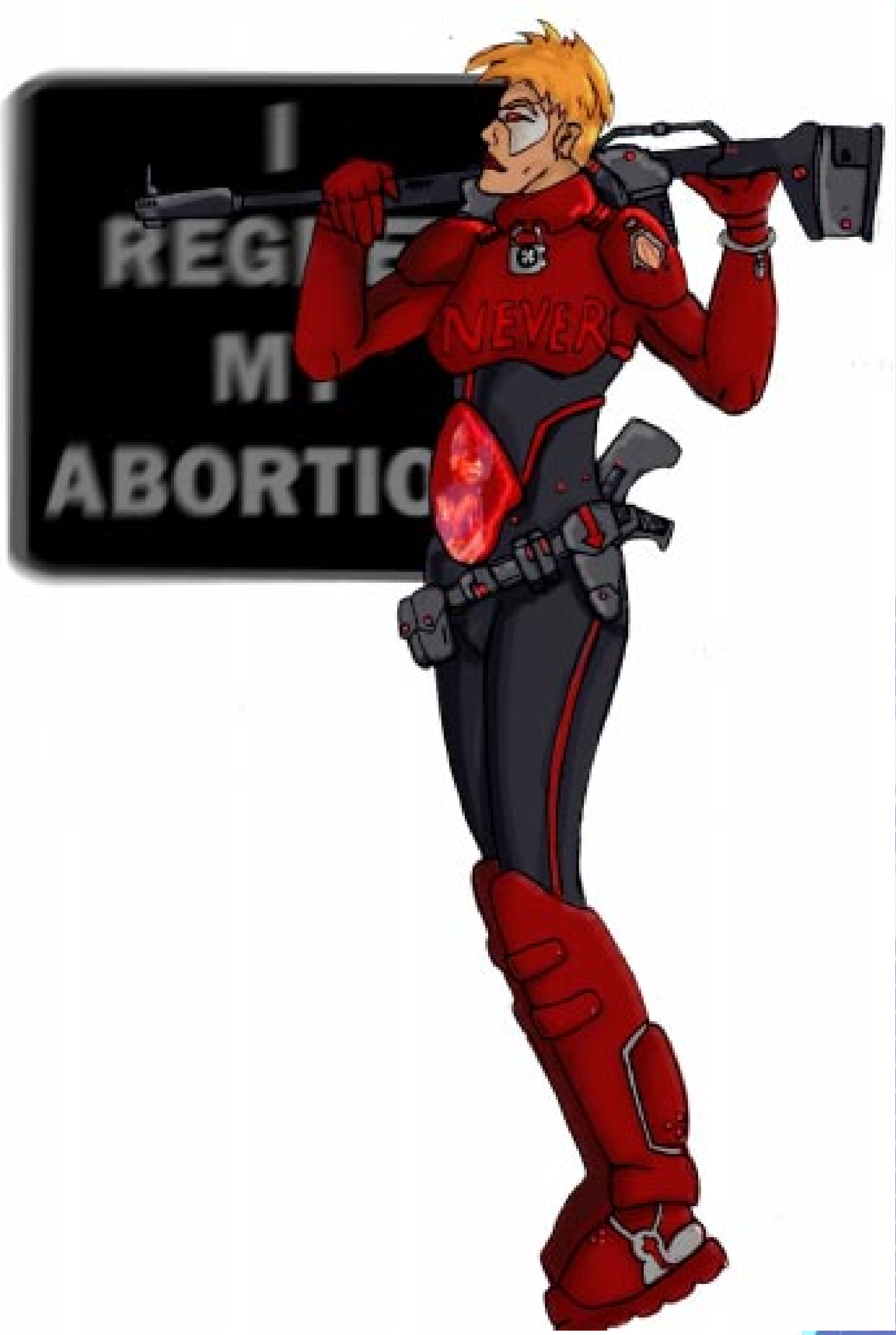
Padlock rescues- locking the doors of abortion clinics- are an old and beloved Lifer tactic. You have mastered a similar technique, projecting a field of discordant psychic force where the favorite tools and weapons of your Choicer enemies simply cannot function.

Prerequisite: Guardian Halo

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum twice daily), you can focus your will and generate a jamming field specifically designed to incapacitate Choicer technology. Doing so is a standard action, which does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

You create a jamming field in a 60 ft radius around your current position. Once established, this field remains in place, even if you move out of the area of effect. No concentration is required to maintain the field.

Once this jamming field is established, all nanotech based cybernetics and technology shut down, rendering most choicer technology useless, particularly the prosthesis of Neo-Witch midwives, ambient nano-colonies, and many forms of cybernetics. Smartlights within the area of effect are also shut down. Once this field is established, it remains active for a number of minutes equal to your CHA modifier. You can, as a free action, dismiss the jamming field, allowing technology to resume functioning normally.



Morbid Speculation (Object Philosophy)

By daydreaming of the sensations and details of your own inevitable death, you can overcome lesser fear. Lifer faithful contemplate the horrors of abortion and saline death to focus their willpower before entering battle.

Prerequisite: Concentration 4 ranks, Treat Injury 1 rank

Benefit: By spending a full round action in concentration and making a DC 10 Concentration check, you can become immune to pain, fear and nausea. You can maintain your semi-entranced, morbid state for an indefinite period.

Each round, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + the number of rounds you have been entranced); on a successful check, you remain in the trance state. However, while entranced, your mind is distant and clouded with morbid obsessions. You cannot use any CHA-based skill while entranced, with the exception of Intimidate.

No One Dies Today (Object Philosophy)

You are a rare soldier for Life, so committed to saving lives, even those of your enemies, that you radiate an aura of life and vitality.

Prerequisites: WIS 13+, any good or pro-life allegiance

Benefit: All dying creatures within 60 ft of you are automatically considered stabilized. This feat's benefit applies both towards enemy creatures and your allies.

In addition, if you spend 8 hours within 60 ft of a wounded creature (s), it regains an additional amount of HP equal to your WIS modifier.

You receive a +2 holy bonus on Treat Injury checks made to treat any creature reduced to negative HP.

Nightmare Zone (Object Philosophy)

You are the terrifying face of the mystic right-to-life movement, an insidious illusionist who blends Evangelical faith, heretical Christian arcana and trans-humanist psychology to work dark miracles. Your object philosophy derived spells can convert or kill, terrify or proselytize.

Prerequisites: Morbid Speculation, Still and Silent Zone, Creative, Craft: visual arts 4 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: You are a powerful Lifer illusionist and terror-smith, capable of casting spells based upon your ranks in Craft: visual arts. You cast spells as a mage of your total character level, including spells which are normally considered divine. The metahuman cannot learn additional spells or copy spells from another mage's spellbook, unless she chooses a magically gifted class.

Each day, the metahuman can cast a limited selection of Philosophy-based spells equal to his or her ranks in Knowledge: theology & philosophy. For example, a metahuman with 8 ranks could cast a total of 8 levels worth of spells per day: two fourth level spells, eight first level spells, or any other combination. Zero level spells count as ½ a spell level.

Casting spells is a standard action which provokes attacks of opportunity. The metahuman's spells require no advance preparation; he decides which spells to cast at the moment he begins speaking the words.

Rescuer Strength (Object Philosophy)

Your faith is unbreakable armor, and like the old martyrs, once you set your feet, you cannot be moved. Your faith transforms you into living marble, allowing you to survive blows that would kill lesser creatures.

Prerequisite: Knowledge: theology & philosophy 8 ranks, Aligned Zealot, Iron Will

Benefit: By making a DC 15 Knowledge: theology & philosophy check as a standard action, you can harden your body against incoming attacks. You may maintain the armored state for a number of minutes equal to your WIS modifier.

While using this feat, you gain a +8 insight bonus to Defense, and it becomes virtually impossible for others to move you against your will. You receive a +8 insight bonus on checks made to resist being tripped, overran or grappled.

Limitations: While entranced, you may not move from the spot you began using the feat at, even to make a 5 ft step. However, you may take actions that do not require mobility as normal, including attacking, defending, using firearms or casting spells. If you choose to move, choose to make a REF save, or are successfully moved, this feat's effect ends immediately.

Sheltered Womb (Object Philosophy)

Lifer object philosophies and psycho-feminism lacks the emphasis on menstruation and the uterine biology of womanhood of Choicer Philosophies, but a handful of Lifer activists have improved upon secrets stolen from their Choicer counterparts.

Lifer mothers to be can blend the most

Spell Level	Spells (arcane) (divine)
Zero	Daze (A), Message (A), Prestiditation (A)
First	Bane (D), Cause Fear (D), Sleep (A)
Second	Knock (A), Magic Mouth (A), Shatter (D)
Third	Bestow Curse (D), Invisibility Sphere (A), Tongues (A)
Fourth	Animate Dead (A),. Faith's Fury (D), Fear (A)
Fifth	Phantom Watchdog (A)

intimate and cherished beliefs, their unshakable faith and iron will with ‘stolen’ Choicer object philosophies to transform the relationship between pregnant mother and gestating fetus.

Prerequisite: Moonwise, Personal Coda

Benefit: Lifer midwives and block mothers often learn this subtle and unusual object philosophy. While pregnant, you can sacrifice a handful of your memories, creating the psychic ‘seed’ of a new consciousness. During your pregnancy and as your child grows, he or she will develop mentally and emotionally in accordance with a psychic template you crafted while the child was still in the womb.

While pregnant, you may sacrifice 100 XP at any time during the pregnancy. In doing so, you give up a handful of memories, and form an empathic bond with the new consciousness your thoughts and expectations will shape during pregnancy.

The resulting child will be born with a predisposition towards you allegiances and will have a personality similar to (but not identical) to your own. As a result of several extra months of ‘experience’ fed into its developing neurology by the mother, the child will receive a +2 racial bonus to any one of its mental attributes, either INT, WIS or CHA, as chosen by the mother.

While pregnant, the gestating fetus acts as a strange type of ‘familiar’. Your senses are sharpened, and you occasionally receive strange, almost extrasensory insight into the world around you.

While pregnant or nursing, you receive the benefits of the Alertness feat, as if you possessed a familiar, as well as a +2 insight bonus on Search and Sense Motive checks.

You may spend an action point at any time during your pregnancy to gain darkvision with a 60 ft range. This temporary enhancement lasts for 24 hours or until you next sleep. If you already possess darkvision, its range increases by 60 ft.

Special: This feat normally applies to yourself and your future children only. However, by expending an action point and engaging in an hour long ritual, you may extend the benefits of this feat to any willing pregnant female, of any species.

Special: You, your sheltered womb and the fetus within cannot be harmed or manipulated by any of the violent, hentai inspired feats found in the Black

Tokyo campaign setting, such as Black Fatherhood or Wombscrape.

Silent Resolve (Object Philosophy)

Your periods of total silence and contemplation center your mind.

Prerequisite: Silent Witness

Benefit: Whenever you enter a period of silence, you receive an additional benefit. Your resolve is strengthened to the point you can easily see through the lies and psi-tricks of your worst enemies. You become completely immune to any mind influencing effect caused, projected or generated by a creature with an allegiance hostile to your Personal Coda. You gain a +2 bonus on all other WILL Saves.

Silent Witness (Object Philosophy)

You are a voice for the voiceless. By entering a politically motivated period of silence, you can focus your will, and draw attention to your beliefs. Even without the blood red half-masks many young Lifers wear during their silent vigils, the world knows your allegiances and beliefs, even through your vow of silence.

Prerequisites: Personal Coda, Perform: dance 1 rank, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank

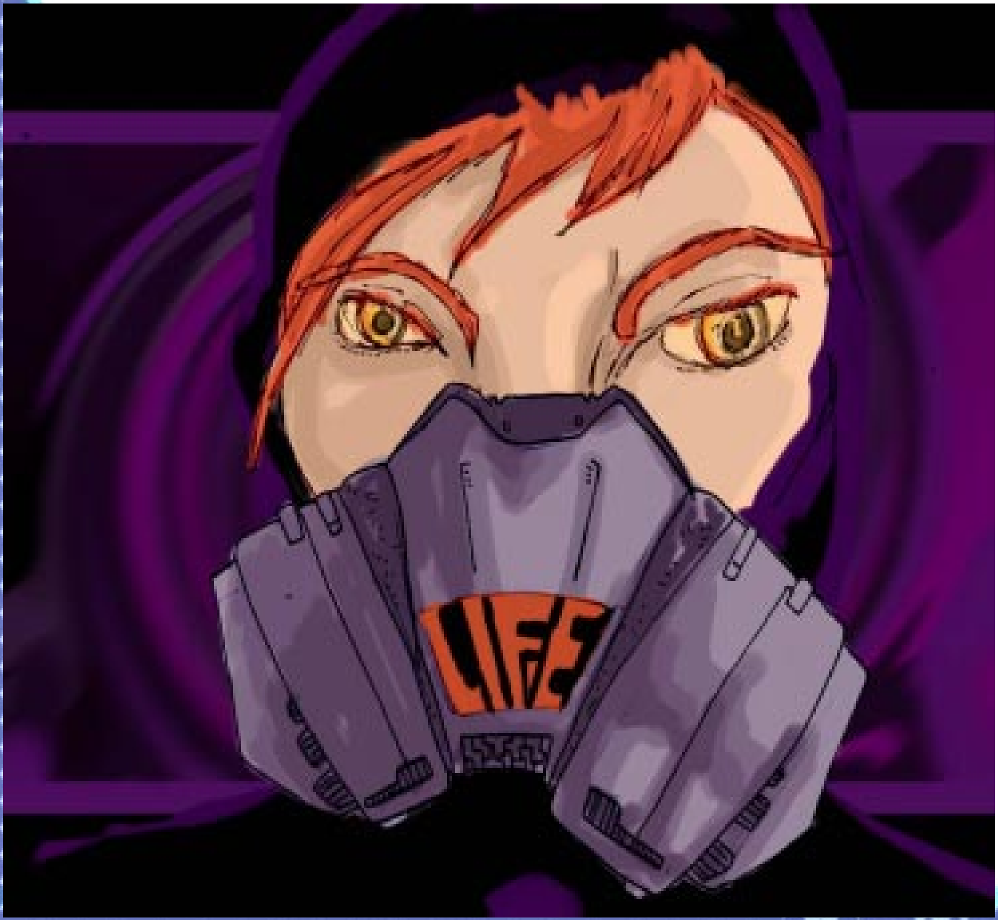
Benefit: You can choose to enter a period of silence, cementing your politico-religious oath with a private period of meditation and prayer lasting at least an hour.

You may designate a specific period of time you will remain silent for; a period of silence must last at least 24 hours, and can stretch up to one year. If you maintain total silence for the specified duration, you may attempt a WILL Save (DC 52 – each week or portion of a week you remain silent). If the save is successful, you receive an action point when your silent protest ends.

During the period of silence, you cannot speak, use any skills requiring speech, cast spells or use psi-powers with verbal components. If you break your silence before the specified duration, you are considered shaken for 24 hours. You may not enter a new period of silence until this period has elapsed.

While undergoing a period of silence, any creatures with declared allegiances hostile to your own must succeed who come within 60 ft of you must succeed at a WILL Save (DC 12 + your CHA modifier) or be distracted by your unnerving silence. Affected creatures suffer a –4 penalty on Search and Spot checks as well as Initiative rolls for as long as they remain within your presence.

Creatures without declared allegiances, as well as creatures with INT scores of 5 or less are unaffected by this feat; a creature must be able to clearly see you to be affected by this feat.



Silent and Still Zone (Object Philosophy)

While lost in your trance of silence, you generate an aura of unearthly stillness, and chilly calm. You are as quiet and somber as a ceremonial grave of the unborn.

Prerequisites: Silent Witness, Silent Resolve, Perform: dance 4 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks

Benefit: At any time while silently witnessing, you can cast a supernatural aura of magical silence as a standard action. The silent zone radiates from your body in a 30 ft spherical radius.

Once per day, you can slow all non-ally creatures caught within your silence zone, as a mage of your total character level.

Soaring Theology (Object Philosophy)

Soaring Churches are a new development in Christian youth ministry, using gravity-defying object philosophies wrapped in Christian ideology and parables to bring the gospel to the young believers of the 22nd Century.

Offering believers the gift of flight itself, as a metaphor for the freedom and love of God, Soaring Churches are a joyous, rapidly expanding voice within the Lifer nation. Soaring services are often held outdoors, with participants taking to the sky, dancing with post-human joy during sermons.

Prerequisites: Iron Will, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 6 ranks

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to your WIS modifier (minimum once daily), you may enter a short meditative trance, where you enter into a passionate prayer state. Doing so is a full round action, which provokes attacks of opportunity.

You gain the ability to fly, buoyed by your faith and latent psi-talents, gaining a fly speed of 60 ft (average maneuverability). Each time this ability is activated, you can remain the ability to fly for an hour. You may take off and land as many times as necessary during this period.

You may only soar while wearing light armor or no armor, and carrying up to a medium load.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you do, your flight speed is increased by +20 ft, and your maneuverability category is increased by one step. Each time this feat is selected, you may activate this ability an additional time per day.

Song of the Silenced (Object Philosophy)

You open your mouth wordlessly, allowing a tidal of sub-sonic rage and murder to spill forth.

Prerequisite: Silent Witness, Silent Resolve

Benefit: A number of times per day equal one plus your CHA modifier (minimum twice daily), while maintaining a silent witness, you may cast Shout as a mage of your total character level.

Unlike the spell, this effect is completely silent, being pitched into the high ultra-sonic range and out of human perception, though survivors report terrifying auditory hallucinations. Creatures with 8 or more ranks in Listen, as well as creatures with any pro-choice or similar allegiance are deafened for double the normal duration.

Lifer Heroes

III. Unlimited Rescue
Early Spring, 2060.
The New Jersey Pine Barrens.

Blood and shit spill out onto the snow, steaming.

The fugitive runs on pure hate and will, not seeing where he's going anymore, only alive in the most liberal definition of the word. The fugitive took a flachette burst into the stomach. As he half staggers, half runs into the black, lifeless, frozen forest, he holds his guts in with his hands and poorly applied medi-packs.

He left a battered, twelve year old mac-tik cruiser a half mile behind him. The blood splattered, shit stained front seat and driver's compartment are filled with the evidence of eight abortion clinic shootings, buried under festering garbage. He left his guns in the car, forgetting about them in his delirium. A pair of fully loaded mag-launch holdouts, with enough kick to blow an abortion doc's bionic arm off at the shoulder, and he left them behind. The fugitive wonders how much good his guns would really do him now, he can hardly lift his arms anymore…. But he still wishes he had the iron.

Clayton Cassidy keeps up a gasping, blubbering stream of consciousness garble as he staggers deeper into the woods. He's not sure if he's talking to himself, or to the voice on the other end of his Bluetooth, or to God, or to…. "g-got the bitches, got the bitch killed my son. Got the bitch. Got that cunt, got a bunch- bunch more of her kind, got…"

Clayton stumbles, feet forgetting what they should be doing because of a root or something under the snow. He goes down hard, and the pain jars him from his eyeball to his testicles. His blood trickles slowly out of him, forming a red puddle on the dingy grey snow. He lays there, half buried in the grimy snowdrift. Shafts of rosy, predawn light illuminate the man, and the staggering, gore strewn path he took to get here.

"did what- id what needed bein' done. Did what god needed me- me to do. Made fuckin' fools outta- outta those APEX shits for two years now. Good run. Damn. Good run. My boy, he's waiting for me. He's…."

And the deep but still female voice is shouting into his earpiece, shrieking at him, ""You squelch that giving up shit, Cassidy! Right muthafucking now! Giving up when things turn to shit is what the Choosers do! Not us!"

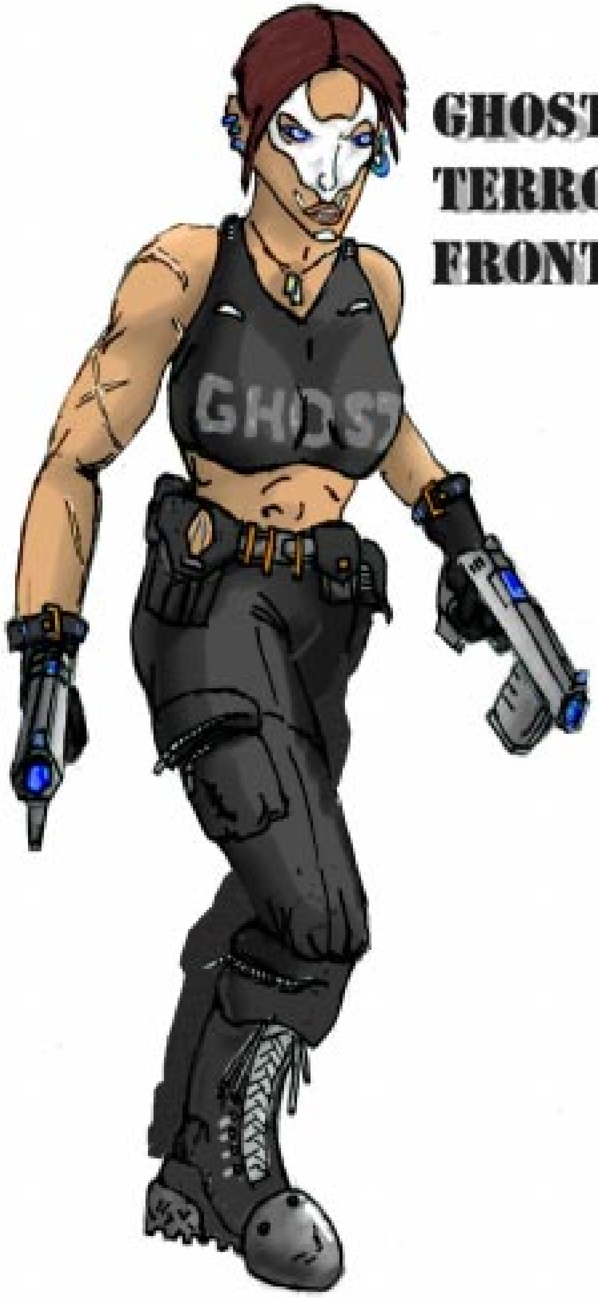
"see my boy. I can see, my good boy."

He somehow manages to rise again, and half crawls deeper into the woods. His dirty grey jeans are soaked with blood, red from crotch to ankle. The medi-packs on his belly cling to him like lifesaving lampreys, and blink red and yellow warning lights. His shirt and what's left of his Kevlar hangs in tatters. The two prison tattoos- the bold Aryan Nation's eagle, and the delicate Lifer sigil- on either side of his neck are splashed with blackish blood.

"not so bad. good fuckin' long run....."

"Cassidy, you fuckin' listen to me! We're six minutes out now! Six minutes, man! You just gotta stay alive that long. You need to get as somewhere open, find a clearing where we can squat the jumper."

GHOST BOSS: TERRORIST FRONT-LINER



"he's with Jesus and he's smiling so big...."

"They're on you Cassidy! You gotta- Fucking move, muthafucker!"

"mu- mutherfucking choosers killed me...."

And somewhere else, Ellen Dacoveney floats in the pure white non-space of a secure neuro-comm line. Her avatar is dressed in the same elegant, vaguely funeral attire she wears in the waking world. Listening in, she narrows her eyes in obvious disdain.

Ghost Boss shares the same thought-space, and floats amid white static. Her avatar reflects her current reality, not an idealized self. Her angry face is blacked with warpaint, her angular features obscured by the stylized grey skull she wears when she's on a rescue. Her t-shirt and jeans have been replaced by old style FutureWarrior armor, stolen from a National Guard armory years before, the word 'ghost' scrawled across the chest with white spray paint. As always, her face is twisted by hate, and with good reason.

She knows what Ellen will say before the words leave her CGI lips.

"Cassidy's a half bright, misogynic thug, nothing more. Why you're risking exposure to rescue him is beyond me."

"Whatever happened to that all life is sacred shit you were singing when you found your girl friend?"

"As you pointed out, there's a difference between a god and, how'd you put it, confused white trash? Which is exactly what Cassidy is- white trash with a gun. We have more than enough of those."

Ghost Boss' eyes go killing cold in the non-space.

In real-space Ghost Boss works the controls of the sub-orbital war plane, trying to squeeze every last ounce of thrust out of the engines. Her painted face is bathed in the indicator lights. Fire control solutions on approaching ATF and APEX craft strobe through her consciousness. Her gloved knuckles are white on the *plane's controls. A Lifer weapons officer, made featureless by his insectoid battle helmet primes the VTOL's particle throwers.*

Ghost Boss' words aren't for her co-pilot, they are for the woman she shares the white space with. "He's also a fucking hero to the direct action boys. He's a martyr and a warrior for the fuckin' preborn, and I'm not leaving him to die, so fuck you if that screws up your plans."

And now her words are for the fugitive, dying in the snow. "Still with me, Cassidy? Four minutes out."

"ain't afraid.... see my boy-"

In the world of static-shot irreality, Ghost Boss screams into her virtual ear piece. "Shut the fuck up about your motherfuckin' boy! He's fucking waiting to see your cracker ass, you fucking understand me?!"

Ellen smirks in non-reality, eyes flickering over to an open info-window showing a real time satellite composite image showing Clayton's current position, as well as that of the VTOL. "This is a farce. You're jeopardizing our entire organization to score points in your own faction. Cassidy's worth more to us dead than alive and you know that as well as I do."

And in the Pine Barrens, Clayton Cassidy comes to a stop, the inertia of his life finally spent. He staggers forward one more step, just one more, and falls. He rolls halfway over to his back and blinks his confused eyes. He doesn't hear Ghost Boss screaming an ETA into his ear piece anymore. His dying eyes lock on a hovering police UAV, and than shut in protest as it shines a 10,000 watt spot on the dying man. The forest's shadows vanish. All shadows vanish.

And Clayton mutters the words, the one question his simple, direct mind can still focus on. "Is…she for real? The Angel? Our Angel?"

Ghost Boss concentrates on the cockpit, and listens to cold silence as, in the white-space, Ellen Dacoveney just holds her hands thoughtfully and says nothing. He co-pilot's voice is a little shakier than she'd like. "He's been spotted. The cops are only going to be two minutes at most behind their UAVs. We going ahead with the rescue?"

The Lifer VTOL is a black and purple hornet, screaming through the clouds at multimach. It descends on an orbital track, armored gun-turret thorax glowing with friction-heat. Massive wings erupt from the shapememory hull, changing the flier's aerodynamic profile as it descends and switches to combat maneuvering. The Barrens rush up to meet it.

And in the white space, Ghost Boss asks a meaningless question. She knows what she's going to do no matter what the answer is. "Well? Your call."

In the thought-space, Ellen brings her left hand to her right wrist, her virtual fingers tracing the memory-echo of the command circuits implanted there. With a three note chime, Ellen begins to fade out, pixelating and digitizing as she goes.

She gets in the last word. "No. It's your call, Ghost Boss. And if this mission fails, if you're captured, it will be your mistake that gives the pagans and the babykillers the justification they've been looking for to annihilate us all. You wanted the responsibility; you make the call. "

And Ghost Boss is alone in the white space.

Ellen Dacoveney opens her eyes again to reality, blinking with disorientation. The conference call was over in less than a minute, real time, and she's been kneeling like an broken toy on a wet marble bathroom floor. Her ratty old shorts and Summer of Rescue '54 t-shirt are soaked with splashed bathwater, and it takes her fragments of a second to remember that before the call came through she was bathing her son. Her Fairfax, the fat brown haired baby splashing happily in a baby tub.

And she forces herself to stop trembling with murderous rage before she goes to touch him, certain the boy would be able to sense that killing emotion.

And over New Jersey, Ghost Boss rises from her command seat, switching over the flight controls to the VTOL's weapons operator. She ducks low under the constellations of flashing instrument panels, moving towards the rear of the craft, to the deployment deck. Her small squad of soldiers are lit only by red jump-lights, and by the never ending loops of anti-abortion propaganda playing silently on the ship's wall screens. She touches her Bluetooth.

"Talk to me, Cassidy. You still alive, asshole?"

The voice over the headset is faint and crippled. "till…till they shoot my ass."

The jump bay doors open, and Ghost Boss's short black hair flies in the wind. The world is a high speed blur outside those retracting jump bay doors. Ghost Boss clutches one of the safety straps tightly, and looks down into the dawn, than back to her troops.

"I drag him on board, we take off again. I don't want us on that fucking ground for more than 40 seconds. I don't care how many Federals we gotta kill to do it."

"We are not screwing this up."

And she steps off the VTOL's deployment deck. And the wind catches her.

She tumbles, going into the same flat spin as a dying fighter. A thought, and she negates her mass, going intangible. Sounds vanish for Ghost Boss as she goes ghost; her intangibility is a deaf-mute universe she can't share with others. She hangs in the air like a strange black kite, and than spreads her arms in imitation of a crucifix. She adds a few thousand molecules of mass back, and begins to fall again. She adjusts her weight and mass unconsciously, giving it no more thought than a hall of famer would stepping up to the batting box.

She doesn't fly, but she comes close. She contorts her intangible muscles and changes her angle of descent. Within seconds, she's miles away from the circling VTOL, high, high above. She fade-flutters herself down to the tree line, where she can see that 10K watt spot. She keys in the military optics she painted over her eyes, and tries to take a rough count of the cops creeping through the forest towards her man, and realizes it's a hopeless game.

The FBI SWAT team encircles the clearing, moving almost silently, their exact movements hidden behind stealth fields. The suits have altered their surface colors to match the snow scape. Dispassionate blue camera lenses spaced equidistantly around the cops' sloping helmets scan the forest.

Clayton tosses a clump of bloody snow at one of the hovering UAVS, trying to drive it away. The bird like craft agilely dodges his impotent attack.

And Ghost Boss slices silently though the leafless tree line. She hits the ground a fraction of a second later, and just as quickly disappears inside the earth's molecules. She's already got her SMG out of its back holster and in her hand, as she swims through the earth.

The SWAT team moves in, screaming for the dying man at the center of the clearing to surrender. Their targeting lasers switch to the visible spectrum for a psychological advantage. And Clayton sneers as the heavily armored troopers rush in.

And Ghost Boss is rising from the ground like a wraith, the subby, low profile machine pistol cradled against her shoulder, the stock braced for the weapon's massive recoil. She breeches the Earth from just behind the soldiers, a silent blur of killing black. She fires, and her SMG makes a enlongated, farting sound.

One of the junior SWAT officers turns as the squad leader's helmet and skull explodes, spraying the rest of the unit with his blood and the suit's milk white neuroconductive gel. A second of shock, and then the surviving troopers are moving Even before the SWAT commander finishes the biological matters of dying, his orphaned squad is diving for cover behind the trees. The SWAT team's suit-minds are screaming electronic warfare warnings at their wearers.

Up on the VTOL, the weapon control officer does his job, not aware that beneath his helmet, his lips have pulled back into a murderer's grin. Urine yellow particle beams rip through the cloud layer, blasting apart ancient pines and the soldiers covering behind them. The forest suddenly becomes a screaming, poison yellow inferno. Blood stains his teeth, bubbles out of his broken nose, mars his tattooed throat, covers his chin, but on the ground, Clayton Cassidy is smiling the same shark's smile.

She wants to cheer, but knows the time for cheering is after the fuckin' fights over. Ghost Boss goes ultra-dense and kicks a SWAT trooper in his white plastic chest plate just as he's rising. Blood geysers from his back, as his ribs are powdered and his heavily armored chest plate becomes shrapnel. Pieces of his own body armor carve out chunks of his lungs.

Finally, after too long a time just frozen in utter horror, as he watches his assigned team cut to ribbons around him, the rookie APEX combat type assigned as fire support for Cassidy's capture starts moving. He isn't one Ghost Boss recognizes, not one of the first responders, but impressive never the less. A feathered serpent like something out of fucked up Aztec myth, a rainbow-plumed demi-god dressed incongruously in matte black battle armor, almost identical to hers. His serpent's mouth opens in a roar of hate and despair, his artificial fangs locked hard into place. The cyber-linked railguns on the thing's back swivel and track into place, twitching for target lock against the intangible bitch killing his men.

The snake-thing moves fast, charging through the air like an out of control subway train, twining and twisting through the forest, dancing around dead trees. She's not sure if the snake thing is trying to present a harder target, or just twisting because even in the heat of combat he just enjoys showing off, and she doesn't really care. The snake dodges a yellow particle beam from above as easily as she'd step outside a clumsy punch.

Ghost Boss empties her gun's clip at the charging snake-demon. No effect at all. Either she can't get through his glittering point defense shields or he simply dodges every round, moving with that same scary speed. His return fire blasts through her intangible chest, stinging as it agitates her molecules. Her lungs feel like fire, like she's suffocating, even though her breathing is slow and steady.

And the feathered serpent blasts down, his weapons raking the ground, passing through her phantom's body and kicking up a wall of burned dirt and water vapor. He's going to barrel right through her, come around for another pass, she knows. At this speed even his turning radius is too wide. She smiles the same killer smile that her Weaps did when he pushed the particle beam's button.

And he's through her, rippling through her ghostly body, and making her entire left side burn as her molecules are scraped raw. She feels sunburned down to her strange quantums, but she doesn't let the almost-pain distract her. She jukes to the left, so her ghost-body is fully clear of the twisting, rainbow serpent. And she turns, like a matador twisting to address the bull after a pass, and she brings her empty SMG up like an improvised club.

The intangible weapon strikes what should be a lethal blow against the serpent's long, sloping skull, but does no damage. The metal of the gun passes into the serpent-thing's skull without a whisper, and when she lets the *gun go, and the textured buttstock leaves her fingers, there is only a low ripping sound as bone and tissue is displaced.*

The serpent's consciousness dies a long time before his body does, but the grace and purpose goes out of his mid-air charge immediately. The serpent falls out of the sky, slamming hard into the burning ground, its bones breaking noisily. Ghost Boss stands again, wiping her hands on her pants in triumph. She spits dismissively as she sprints through the treeline, to where Clayton is laying. Job well done.

Rescue never looked so wonderful. The dying man manages to look to the sky one more time, that shark's smile frozen on his face as he slips into blackness. His last sight is the Lifer VTOL descending majestically, it's yawning jump bay a welcome oasis of gentle white light. A pair of Lifer shells are providing landing zone clearance, mammoth guns held in steel gauntlets. They are in shadow, lit only by the images flickering on their armor's plasma-display propaganda screens.

As soon as Ghost Boss slams him onto the jump deck and the deployment bay doors slam shut again, the VTOL is back in the air. Medics are working Clayton almost as quickly, and fortunately, he's not conscious to see how roughly, how desperately they are treating him. Ghost Boss kneels beside the dying man, as the EMTS work furiously to salvage something, to keep him alive until they reach Kodiak.

She grasps his hand in a futile attempt to offer him some comfort, to do something. She hates herself for not learning field medicine right now.

She leans in, and knowing that there are only Lifers to hear, says something she hopes he can understand.

"You did good, Cassidy, you fucking did good, man. That angel of ours is fucking real. She'll help you. She'll make you better. She'll fix you."

And the VTOL climbs straight up, to where the air goes thin and blue-black, and races along a pre-planned extraction route towards Alaska. Towards life.

Pro-Life Scion (General)

You are the offspring of Lifer intelligentsia and the child of faith-based political giants. You accompanied your parents to rallies and street demonstrations, and have a keen understanding of the movement that is your birthright.

Prerequisite: CHA 13+, Character level first

Benefit: Your family's connection to the political arm of the Lifer movement increases your Wealth bonus by +1, and increases your Reputation bonus by +1 among other Lifers.

A number of times per day equal to your CHA modifier (minimum once daily) you can draw upon your familiarity with the quirks and idiosyncrasies of those within the movement. If you fail any Bluff or Diplomacy made against any one with a Lifer or similar allegiance, you may reroll the check. You must accept the result of the second roll, even if it is worse than the first roll.

Starting Occupation: Full Pro-Lifer

To be Full Pro-Life, you must be a nomad, a rootless evangelist living and working out of a well stocked RV emblazoned with anti-choice truths and gore-splattered holo-screens. Full Pro-Life evangelists migrate from city to city, working as day laborers and messengers, modern warrior-aesthetics who utterly reject a society that condones abortion and paganism.

They survive by their wits and their commitment, by the generosity of their comrades and by scavenging and imaginative theft- especially against Choicer marks. Full Pro-Lifers have larceny in their veins and the sneakiest chapters of *Closed* tattooed over their hearts.

Prerequistes: Age 15+, any Lifer or similar allegiance.

Skills: Choose three of the following as permanent class skills. IF the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Bluff, Craft (mechanical, visual art), Disable Device, Drive, Forgery, Gamble, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Knowledge (civics, theology & philosophy), Profession (any blue collar), Repair, Sleight of Hand and Survival

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Animal Affinity, Brawl, Builder, Deceptive, Gearhead, Guide, Low Profile, Meaningful Ink, Personal Coda, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Vehicle Expert. Alternatively, the character can select any Lifer feat for which he meets the prerequistes.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0
Reputation Bonus Increase: +0

Starting Occupation: Untainted

Untainted Lifers live completely off-grid, rejecting even the moderate comforts and familiarity of the Lifer Enclaves. To them, America is under the thumb of the Anti-Christ, Roe Athene and Her Choicer nation. Even the Lifer nation has been subverted by the Roe and her hellish Treaty. Untainted Lifers live completely apart from American society, surviving in insolated forest camps protected by metahuman guardians. They stockpile their gear, prepare their children and pray for the day when they will be divinely called upon to strike back, waiting for the return of the Messiah. Their insular natures mean the untainted have little contact with modern America, living instead as some strange 22nd Century breed of mountain men.

Their beliefs make them easy prey for the machinations of the Lifer hierarchy, and Untainted fighters make good allies- provided a Lifer politico can prove he hasn't been corrupted by the Anti-Christ. Aside from combat, Untainted Lifers have little contact with the outside world. To them, even a routine excursion into the city to purchase the few supplies they can't build themselves is an expedition fraught with peril.

Prerequistes: Age 12+, any Lifer or similar allegiance.

Skills: Choose three of the following as permanent class skills. IfF the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Climb, Craft (mechanical, structural), Drive, Handle Animal, Knowledge (earth & life sciences, theology & philosophy), Listen, Repair, Ride, Spot, Survival, Swim, Treat Injury

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Animal Affinity, Brawl, Dodge, Endurance, Gearhead, Track. Alternatively, the character can select any Lifer feat for which he meets the prerequistes.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0
Reputation Bonus Increase: +0

In addition to the new advanced classes described in this sourcebook and the character options detailed in the *Psi-Watch Campaign*

Setting, the heroes and villains of Otherverse America make full use of the advanced classes described in the *D20 Modern core rulebook* and *D20 Future* supplement. Of course, with America splitting across religious and political lines, even the most mundane careers have been politicized, and a Choicer Investigator or Helix Warrior probably looks a lot different than their Lifer counterparts.

Many of the advanced classes described in Skortched Urf Studio's *Department Seven Advanced Class Update* series can also be integrated into the Otherverse America setting. Many of the high tech or psionic advanced classes can be added to the campaign with virtually no modification. It's easy to imagine a Lifer Shotgun Surgeon or a Choicer Mind Reaper.

Advanced classes that incorporate modern magic elements need a little more work before they're ready for use with the Otherverse. In most cases, the gamemaster can explain away magical Supernatural or Spell-like abilities as the result of cutting edge smartlight weapons, thought-virals or strange new Object Philosophies. Many of these magic using classes have slightly modified entry requirements, which add mastery of the Neural Conditioning Feat to the class prerequistes. Such modifications are described below.

Most classes not mentioned here can be used without modification (or with only minor, cosmetic alterations) in the Otherverse America setting.

Lifer Advanced Classes

Lifer Soldiers: Soldiers, Gunslingers, Martial Artists, Field Officers and Helix Warriors, Combat Types and Frontliners (from Psi-Watch)

Lifer soldiers are more independent, less trained, and much less dependant on a central authority or defined chain of command than their Choicer counterparts. Like their Choicer nemesis, Lifer military experts may select Lifer martial arts in place of typical class-based bonus feats.

Lifer soldiers often begin their careers as self-taught experts. Many select the Termite starting occupation, and some begin their military careers as Irregulars (Intermediate Classes, LPJ Designs, 2006). Most Lifer fighters are self taught urban warfare experts, or learn at the feet of a father or uncle, a mentor within the movement Other Lifer soldiers are lucky enough to receive formal combat training at a well-hidden Lifer strike-base, and these professional soldiers are among the best in the world.

The Perfect Archer advanced class (Skortched Urf, 2006) is a popular choice among Lifer terrorists, especially those who grew up among the Untainted forest's enclaves. Archery is useful for both subsistence level hunting and urban assassination. Even better, a specially designed compound bow may be expensive, but its cost is a fraction of the price of a military sniper rifle or rail gun. The letter of the Treaty of Boston doesn't prevent ownership of a bow, and in the hands of a super-strong metahuman a good titanium/Kevlar composite bow firing a depleted uranium arrow can do as much damage as a field artillery piece.

Lifer Frontliners are usually favor skull-like Psychofeedback Masks, as a visual symbol of their commitment to the pre-born. Ghost Boss, one of the most infamous and historically important Lifer soldiers, is a prime example of the role Lifer Frontliners played during the War. Lifer Frontliners remain the most dedicated, uncompromising soldiers within the Lifer A.O.G. Many War-era Frontliners completely rejected the Treaty of Boston, instead going underground or disappearing into the bowels of some American supermax. Surviving Frontliners remain some of the angriest (and most lethal) weapons in the Lifer Nation's arsenal.

Unlike its Choicer counterparts, the Lifer Nation fielded relatively few Helix Warriors during the War. Due to a lack of resources and a deep, culture-wide distrust of gene-tech. Most Lifer infantrymen and women were ordinary Soldiers, Gunslingers and Field Officers; to the Lifers, keeping a distinct division between ordinary soldiers and Powered elites made good tactical sense. However, due to the presence of the star-goddess Artemis as their commanding general, the Lifer Nation has a much higher percentage of Lifechained metahumans in its ranks than the Choicers.

Lifer Politicians: Personality, Negotiator and Advocate, Corporate Raider (Corporate Insiders, LPJ Designs, 2006) Advanced Classes

The Coalition for Life is a military organization, but it is also a political one. The current managing director, Fairfax Dacoveney, is a multiclass Negotiator/Corporate Raider, and one of the most effective political leaders on the planet. The CFL provides funding and exposure for Lifer politicians and demagogues at all levels of politics, from local elections all the way to Senate campaigns. Many Lifer politicians begin their careers as Sidewalk Consolers (Choice and Blood, LPJ Designs, 2007).

Theological and political leadership is indistinguishable within the Enclaves. Hardline preachers and city mayors wield equal power, and in many cases, are indistinguishable from one another. As such, Lifer politicians belonging to the classes described above, as well as Smart, Dedicated and Charismatic heroes working in a related field, may add Anointed Cleric, Evangelist, High Cleric, Military Chaplin and Squad Leader to their list of class-based bonus feats.

Intangibles: The Great Fort Collins Fuck Up

If you hear a Lifer soldier refer to Ft. Collins, it's a safe bet he's not happy, and is watching everything go wrong. The Battle of Ft. Collins, CO occurred on January 17, 2062, and was one of the most decisive and disastrous battles of the entire war. From start to finish, the mission was an unmitigated disaster for Lifer troops, and sapped much of the momentum they had gained during the first year of the Abortion War. Ft. Collins is such an infamous part of Lifer soldier-lore, it's become a general profanity- the Lifer equivalent of "snafu".

Seeing an opportunity to strike at a poorly defended but politically important abortion clinic in Ft. Collins, CO, several Lifer cells descended on the city. Deciding to attack several days before the Roe Anniversary, before the clinic's defenses could be complete, these terror groups, all acting independently, chose the morning of Friday, January 17 to strike. Over the course of the morning, the various AOG strike-teams moved into position, all in civilian clothes and acting as inconspicuously as possible.

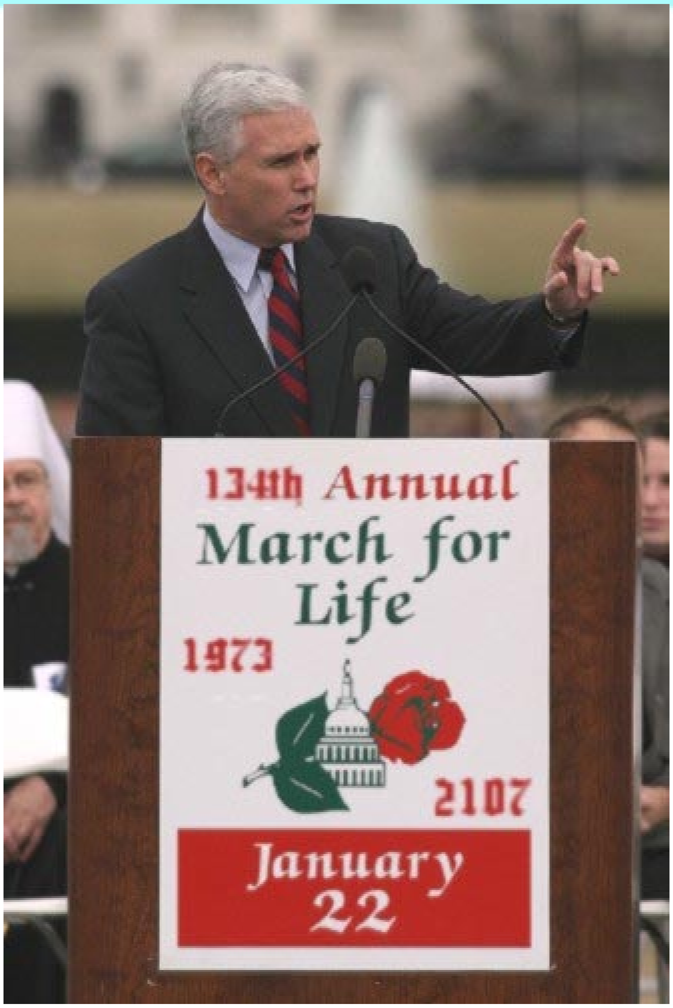
The disaster began when the first cell- Ninth Life- powered up and burst from concealment. The other cells in the area assumed that their cover had been blown, and the men and women of The Ninth were Choicer clinic defenders. Unfortunately, Ninth Life assumed the same about the other Lifer metahumans who broke cover. In seconds, a pitched battle had erupted, destroying several city blocks, and killing dozens of Lifer Powereds before anyone had a chance to come to their senses. When the smoke finally cleared, the targeted abortion clinic had suffered only minor damage, and dozens of Lifer powereds lie dead.

After the disaster, the Lifer AOG rethought its policy of compartmentalization and leaderless resistance. While still practicing a high degree of secrecy and allowing individual units great autonomy, the AOG put in place communications protocols and friend/foe identification schemes to ensure such a disaster would never happen again. The Choicer intelligence community likes to take credit for Ft. Collins, and many high level Lifer leaders have been content to let them. Most Lifers would rather blame Ft. Collins on non-existent sabotage and traitors than on plain dumb luck.

RESCUE
HAMMER
ABORT
IS
MURD
LIFE

The Skele-Teen Advanced Class (from Skortched Urf Studios D7ACU Series)

If you grew up knowing that back in the day, your daddy wore a Lifer unit patch of a grinning skull and saved babies with a OCIW-6, becoming a Pro-Life Skele-teen isn't all that unusual a path. The Lifers might celebrate life, and kill to defend the living and helpless preborn, but they embrace the symbols of death. Skeletons and skulls are common uniform motifs; Lifer believers scar their faces and tattoo their bodies with symbolic *memento mori* symbolizing their beliefs.



Skele-teens represent a new generation emerging within the Lifer movement. Most Skele-teens are the children and grandchildren of Lifer war veterans, kids who've grown up hard and angry in Lifer enclaves, raised on a diet of Evangelical militancy. Confronted every day by the results of their parent's defeat, this new generation of Lifer warriors has adopted new tactics and new philosophies.

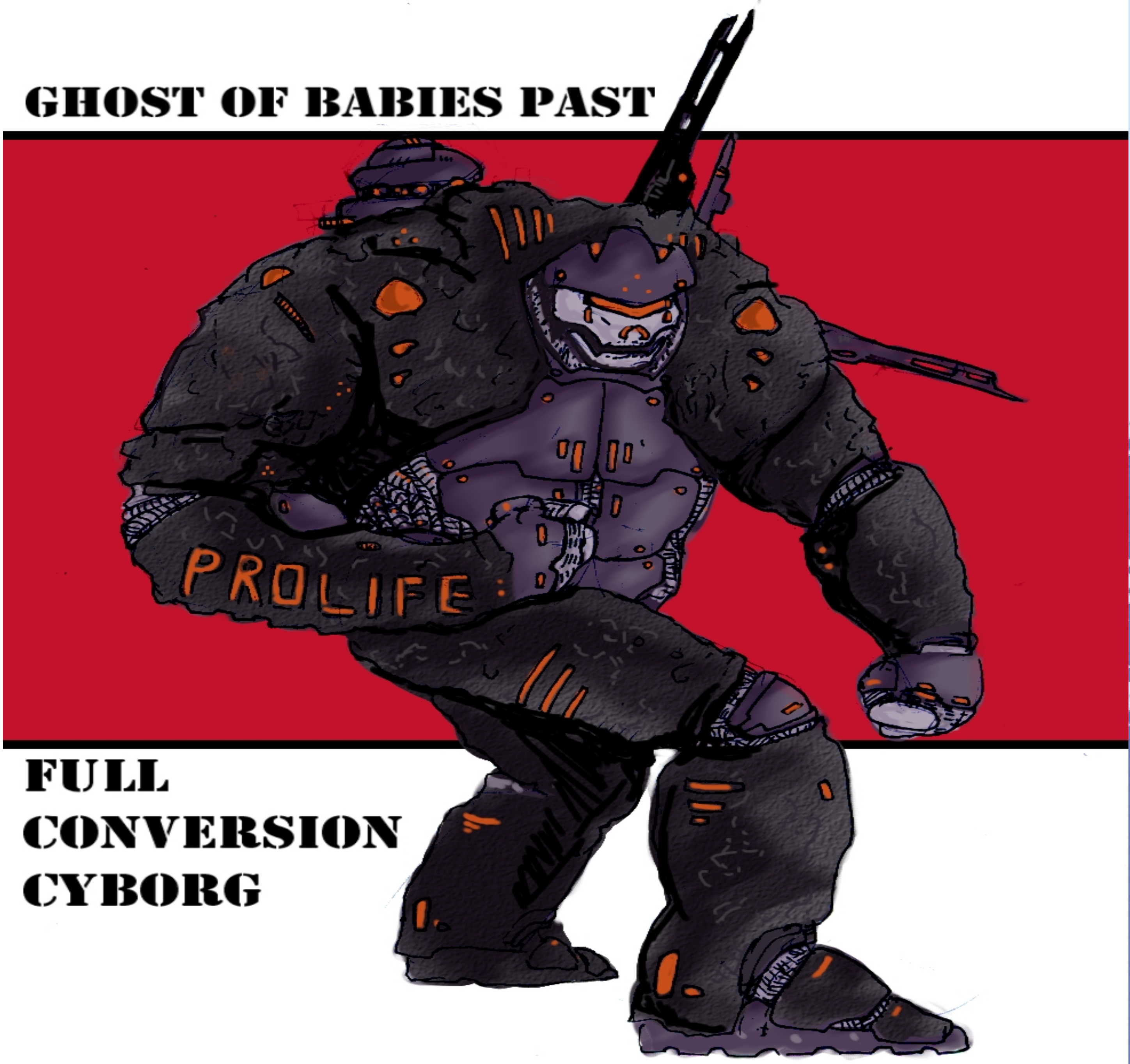
Lifer Skele-teens are necrophile rebels, who wear the make up and blood stains of their chosen class to force outsiders to confront the 'horrors of abortion'- wrapping politics inside zombie movie iconography. Forcing the older generation to confront the atrocities it committed (and worse, the battles they lost) during the War is only a bonus. Lifer Skele-teens may not look like it, in their bloodstained Lifer BDUs and zombie-style cybernetics, but they are among the most committed and passionate of all the new generation Lifer activists.

Entry Requirements: A potential Lifer Skeleton must have selected the Neural Conditioning feat prior to taking a level in this class. Other entry requirements are unchanged.

Bonus Feats: Lifer Skele-teens may add the following Object Philosophies to their list of class-based bonus feats:

Defenseless Hands, Direct Action Ghost, Dying of Choice, Ghoulish Reminder, Morbid Speculation, Nightmare Zone, Silent Witness, Song of the Silenced, Still and Silent Zone.

GHOST OF BABIES PAST



FULL CONVERSION CYBORG

The Pro-Life Closer Advanced Class

“Beginning officially with the Freedom of Choice Act — we, the remnant of God-fearing men and women of the United States of America, do officially declare war on the entire child killing industry. After praying, fasting, and making continual supplication to God for your pagan, heathen, infidel souls, we then peacefully, passively presented our bodies in front of your death camps, begging you to stop the mass murdering of infants. Yet you hardened your already blackened, jaded hearts. We quietly accepted the resulting imprisonment and suffering of our passive resistance. Yet you mocked God and continued the Holocaust.

No longer! All of the options have expired. Our Most Dread Sovereign Lord God requires that whosoever sheds man’s blood, by *man shall his blood be shed. Not out of hatred of you, but out of love for the persons you exterminate, we are forced to take arms against you. Our life for yours - a simple equation. Dreadful. Sad. Reality, nonetheless. You shall not be tortured at our hands. Vengeance belongs to God only. However, execution is rarely gentle."*

-Declaration of War, Closed: 99 Covert Ways to Stop Abortion, circa 2000 (author unknown)

The Lifer Closer is the most fearsome, heavily armored terrorist ever to walk the planet. Utterly committed to direct action rescue- to ending abortion by any means necessary, but preferably by violence- the Closer has been enhanced with alien cybernetics and onboard weapons. The Closer is so heavily modified and armored he's no longer recognizable as human. Using technology bequeathed to them by their alien field commander, Artemis, the Lifer Army of God has created a generation of nearly indestructible full conversion cyborgs. Their minds are as inhuman as their bodies; these warriors for the pre-born have willingly sacrificed kindness and mercy, along with their human flesh and bone, in their quest to end abortion.

Profile of a Lifer Closer

The Lifer Closer is a full conversion cyborg super-soldier. Unlike APEX combat types, no effort has been made to retain the subject's human appearance. Closers are chosen for their commitment and their willingness to kill. They know full well they'll be transformed into a hulking, bio-mechanical monster, and no attempt is made to hide what these creatures are. The Closer is a walking tank, a living, ultra-lethal weapon in the cause of Life.

Despite their horrific appearance, Lifer Closers are an accepted part of Lifer culture. Infamous Closers are cultural heroes, as much as a celebrity as any Idol Singer or NFL running back. Children are indoctrinated from birth to admire and respect the sacrifices Closers have made, giving up their flesh and blood to protect the preborn. Closers are heroes to Lifer children, who daydream of their own careers as cybernetic terror-bringers when they grow up.

The fastest path into the Lifer Closer Advanced Class is through the Strong Hero Basic Class, though other paths are possible. Many prospective Closers have at least a few levels in Soldier or Gunslinger before their conversion.

The Closer in the Campaign

January 22nd, 2061.
Exactly 88 years after the Roe vs. Wade decision.
Ogalada-Souix Reservation, SD.

"The Second American Civil War began just after 10 am CST on January 22, 2061. A historic, highly controversial abortion clinic on Ogalada Souix reservation land was wiped off the map, and it's RAINBOW Liberty defenders were slaughtered by a post-human terrorist codenamed Life Tank."

-wikipedia.mesh, circa 2107

A cybernetic foot slams down hard enough to shake the small medical building's foundations. The few remaining unbroken windows shatter in a flurry of chaotic music. The cyborg is a wall of unpainted, pitted and scraped grey steel, an ugly style-less war machine that weighs tons, and uses a foot-design stolen from the African elephant to support it's tank-like bulk. The cyborg slams through a white plaster wall, and it shatters easily; framed pro-choice holo-art shatters explosively. A coffee table filled with cheap celeb-manga overturns.

The Lifer sigil is painted proudly, colorfully on the otherwise slate grey cyborg's barrel chest in crude and imprecise stencil work. The hulking cyborg is a collection of guns, dozens of long independently controlled artillery pieces twitch and kill under the creature's superstrong humanoid arms. The cyborg's weapons resemble the many, segmented legs of some strange iron insect.

The cyborg's face appears human, a screaming bald headed man with a neatly trimmed goatee; a full conversion imitation of what used to be Clayton Cassidy screams his endless rage from atop his metal chariot. Surprisingly, horrifically nimble, the cyborg clambers over an overturned sofa and shattered coffee table. It rushes forward out of the smoke and the blue gel-rain from the clinic's fire suppression system.

Enjoying his newfound power, the cyborg bellows something like laughter as it bashes its way through procedure rooms, tossing aside operating tables and equipment shelves. A patient, still dressed only in a white medical smock runs down the long wood panel shot-gun corridor, her terrified Souix boyfriend desperately trying to pull her to safety.

All of a sudden, a new target leaps into his field of vision, and the being that used to be Clayton Cassidy smiles his old murder's smile. The thirty something abortion doctor with a cute nosering is an old-style physician, implanted with outdated medical-nanites, not top of the line Choicer cybersystems. The Souix woman is screaming, waving her arms in front of the cyborg's face, willing to sacrifice her own life to get her patients clear. The metallic beast's shadow falls over her face.

Target lock flashes orange in the cyborg's field of vision, highlighting the terrified doctor. His cyber-mind instantly calculates the distance to her, selects anti-personnel ammunition load, braces him against his rail-gun's recoil and......

Her chest explodes into a red and brown mist, and the rail gun flachette keeps going, barely slowed by passing through her. The wild shot blows through the clinic's outer wall, the sonic boom of the weapon shattering glass for miles around. The vacuum of the projectile's supersonic passage sucks blood and shrapnel into the winter morning outside.

The cyborg steps over her corpse automatically, her eyes wide open and staring. The cyborg steps out of the blasted clinic, feet sinking two feet deep into the South Dakota snow. He can hear the screaming approach warnings his cybermind is blaring, and subconsciously the metallic beast calculates how long it will be until the approaching bogies are on-site. With a smile, he realizes it won't be long now, and soon, he'll have more targets.

The being now and forever known as Life Tank steps out into the snow, waiting for his chance to write history with bullets...

A single first or second level Closer is a decent match for a suit of combat power armor or a main battle tank. A squad of more experienced Closers can lay waste to a good chunk of a city, and hold their own against any metahuman opposition. Closers are some of the most powerful cybernetic soldiers ever developed. They have one purpose: killing, specifically, killing heavily armed Choicer adversaries.

Closers are deployed as shock troops, ahead of a conventional infantry and shell force. With their inhuman durability and lethal rail cannons, Closers are often called upon to 'soften up' Choicer fortifications, with conventional Lifer troops moving in after the elite Closer units to hold territory or take command of any surviving prisoners of war.

Requirements:
To qualify to become a Lifer Closer, a character must fulfill the following criteria.
Base Attack Bonus: +5
Skills: Knowledge: streetwise 4 ranks, Knowledge: streetwise 2 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank
Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Far Shot, Elite Clearance, either Personal Coda or Aligned Zealot

Special: A Pro-Life Closer receives his metahuman combat abilities through the implantation of alien cybersystems, which permanently alter body and mind. Only the Lifer Army of God possesses the technology and know-how necessary to create these fearsome combat cyborgs. The conversion surgery and genetic modification requires hospitalization for several days and a readjustment and training period requiring several weeks.

Special: The Closer must be an active, trusted member of the Lifer AOG or a similar organization, and dedicate his primary allegiance to the Lifer cause or any Conservative Christian ethos.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Lifer Closer advanced class.

Hit Die

The Lifer Closer gains 3d4 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Lifer Closers are incredibly tough, and thanks to their well designed genetic enhancements and body-wide cybersystem upgrades, they accumulate HP at an incredible rate! Every level, a Closer is guaranteed at least 3 new Hit Points, probably many more, enabling one of these juggernauts to go toe to toe with any Choicer shell or combat-type.

Action Points

The Lifer Closer gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Lifer Closer's class skills are as follows.

Climb (STR), Demolitions (INT), Drive (DEX), Gather Information (CHA), Hide (DEX), Intimidate (CHA), Jump (STR), Knowledge (streetwise, tactics, theology & philosophy) (INT), Pilot (DEX), Read/Write Language, Repair (INT), Speak Language, Spot (WIS), Survival (WIS)

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + INT Modifier

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Closer receives a bonus feat, which must be chosen from the following list.

Aircraft Operations, Anti-Tank Warfare, Brawl, Command Airstrike, Clobber, Drive-By Attack, Dead Aim, Fearsome Violence, Frightful Presence, Gearhead, Heroic Surge, Heavy Weapons Specialist, Improved Initiative, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Low Profile, Pointblank Shot, Precise Shot, Penetrating Fire, Skip Shot, Streetfighting, Squad Leader, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (rescue rails)

Table: The Lifer Closer Advanced Class

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Closer Upgrade	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+5 HP	+2	+0	+0	Full Conversion, Lifechain Subtype	+0	+1
2nd	+1	DR 1/-	+3	+0	+0	Rescue Rails, Violent Reputation	+1	+1
3rd	+2	+5 HP	+3	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+1	+1
4th	+3	DR 2/-	+4	+1	+1	Cyberframe Evolution	+1	+2
5th	+3	+5 HP	+4	+1	+1	Rescue-fire	+2	+2
6th	+4	DR 3/-	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+2
7th	+5	+5 HP	+5	+2	+2	Rescue Rails II	+2	+3
8th	+6	DR 4/-	+6	+2	+2	Cyberentic Perfection	+3	+3
9th	+6	+5 HP	+6	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+3
10th	+7	DR 5/-	+7	+3	+3	Deep Concealment	+3	+4

Closer Upgrade Program (EX): The alien cybernetics and combat-organs implanted into the chest cavity of a newly created Lifer Closer are in a constant state of bio-mechanical evolution. Biomech 'mutations' increase the robot warrior's survivability by upping system redundancy and armor density.

- At each odd numbered level, the Closer receives 5 bonus HP, in addition to the HP the warrior gains from leveling up and CON Modifier, if any.

- On even numbered levels, the Closer 's Damage Reduction increases by +1/-. This damage reduction increase stacks with DR increases from other sources, including feats and Tough Hero class levels.

By 10th level, the Pro-Life Closer has received DR 5/- and 25 bonus Hit Points from membership in this class.

Full Conversion (EX): The Closer represents one of the most extreme examples of military cyber-conversion in history. Nearly all the Closer's original tissue is replaced with durable cybernetic analogues derived from reverse engineering Lifechained cybersystems provided by Artemis. Very little of the original creature remains- typically only the cyborgs organic brain, spinal column and optic nerves; the rest is surgically removed and replaced with alien bio-systems.

The Closer's new physique is a hulking bio-mechanical nightmare, resembling a suit of heavy power armor more than a living thing. Individual Closers customize their cyber-chassis with unique decorative elements and additional weapons systems. In most cases, these cyborgs are designed to strike fear into the hearts of their Chooser enemies, and are issued exo-armor resembling demonic gargoyles, covered in plasma screens displaying a continual loop of anti-abortion propaganda clips.

One of the most famous examples of this class was the War-era terrorist, the third Ghost of Babies Past, a cybernetically enhanced juggernaut wrapped in a black stone exoskeleton carved with the weeping faces of hundreds of tiny newborns.

At first level, the Lifer Closer receives the following enhancements, as a result of his onboard cybernetics.

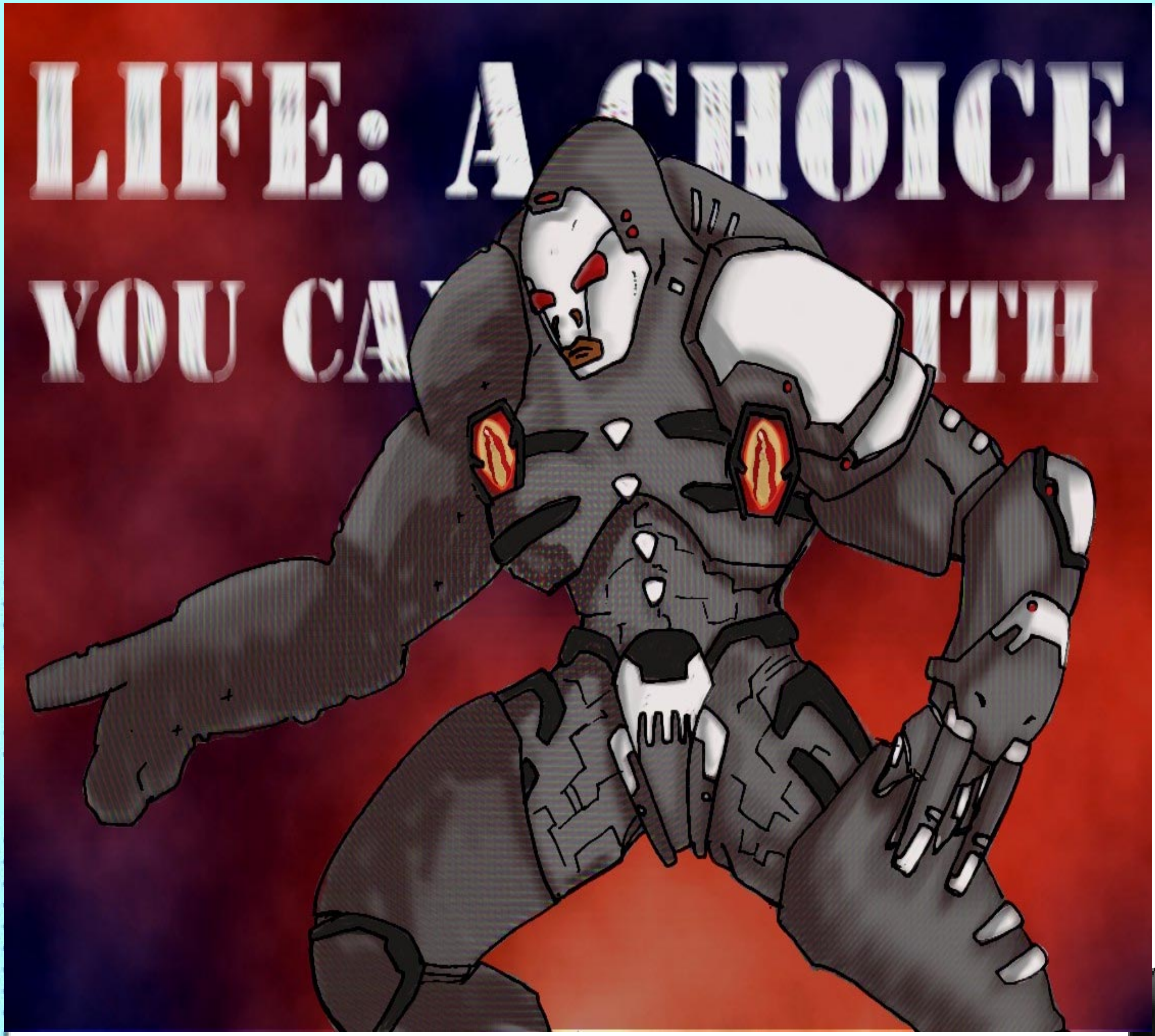
- The Closer gains *lowlight vision* and *darkvision* with a 90 ft range.

- The Closer receives an implanted communication link and onboard computer, similar to the implants described in the Dept Seven Tech Update: cybernetics. These implants allow the cyborg to communicate wirelessly through the Mesh, send and receive radio and cellphone signals, and perform computer use tanks as normal for a standard computer system. Closers physically disable their wireless card when it is not in use, and cannot easily be hacked.

- The Closer receives a standard IFF (Identification Friend/Foe) transponder which identifies his rank and allegiance in the Lifer Army. The cyborg can activate or suppress this transponder beacon as a standard action.

- The Closer 's integrated armor provides the creature with a +4 equipment bonus to Defense, which increases throughout the cyborg's career. This bonus increases to +6 at 5th level, and +8 at 8th level. Unfortunately, the cyborg's bulk prevents the Closer from wearing additional external armor. The cyborg can pilot power armor, but the Closer's proportions and anatomy mean the suit has to be custom fitted, increasing the total purchase DC by +6.

- The Closer no longer needs to eat, breathe, or drink. He becomes immune to the effects of vacuum and radiation. He becomes immune to non-magical heat and cold. The



fully cybernetic Closer becomes immune to non-magical disease and poisons, ability drain and energy drain.

- Redundant organs and self repair systems enable the Closer to shrug off lethal damage. The Closer has a 50% chance to ignore the additional damage from a critical hit, as if he had the *fortification* ability.

The Closer's class abilities are derived from onboard cybersystems, but do not count against the total number of implants the cyborg can receive. In campaigns using the variant Drain rules for cybernetics, the Closer's class-based cybernetics do not have a drain rating. Thanks to the Closer's integrated fusion stack, the cyborg can withstand a number of additional implants (or points of Drain) equal to ½ his class level, rounded down, with a minimum of one additional implant.

System Limitations: The Closer is limited by his cybernetics as much he is enhanced by them. The Closer 's onboard targeting systems will not allow the cyborg to physically attack or fire a weapon at any creature, vehicle or object positively identified as being a Lifer, either by visual recognition, command from a known and trusted superior in the Lifer army, or through recognition of a Lifer IFF beacon. If magically or psionically compelled to attack his own troops, the Closer will simply hold fire, and take no action.

The onboard 'mother-minders' built into the Closer's neuro-cybernetics prevent easy interaction with known Choicers (recognized either visually, through dialogue or via an IFF transponder). The Closer suffers a –6 penalty on all CHA based skill checks made against a Choicer target, with the exception of the Intimidate skill.

As a fully cybernetic creature, the Lifer Closer does not heal naturally, but may be repaired like any other high tech device. If the Closer possessed Gene Feats or extraordinary racial abilities before the cybernetic conversion, they are lost. However, the nature of the cyber conversion allows the Closer to retain any Lifechain feats, since the creature's cybernetics are at least partially based on Lifechain technology themselves.

A Lifer Closer's cybernetics will not be allowed to fall into enemy hands. Immediately upon being reduced to -1 HP or lower, the cyborgs fusion stack will self destruct. This explosion completely atomizes the cyborg, and inflicts 10d6 points of fire damage to everything in a 30 ft radius (REF DC 15 for half damage). The blast site is considered a *severely irradiated* area for 1d6 hours following the detonation.

Lifechain Subtype (EX): As the technological 'offspring' of Artemis, Lifer Closers are considered to be Lifechained creatures. They are considered to have a single Lifechain feat for the purpose of predatory Lifechain abilities. A Lifer Closer may select the Awakened Heritage feat at any point during his career, not just at first level.

Rescue Rails (EX): The alien cybernetics which initially transformed the Closer from a Lifer believer to a bio-mechanical juggernaut continue to mutate the cyborg. Massive integrated rail guns erupt from the creature's hull and remain permanently extended. Closers speak of their onboard weapons as beloved friends and symbiote, not simple rail-rifles, and talk about how the barrels will track automatically and lock-on when a Choicer target presents herself, and how the guns seem almost hungry for violence.

The Closer gains a pair of integrated weapons: long-barreled magnetic acceleration rail-guns, which protrude like a bull's horns from either the cyborg's shoulder armor or jut from his heavily armored forearms.

The Closer's Rescue Rails produce their ammunition internally, and do never need to be reloaded. The cyborg can use any gun combat feat he possesses with these integrated weapons.

Rescue Rails (Large Integrated Rail Gun)
Damage: 3d10 ballistic
Critical: 20 / x2
Range Increment: 100 ft
Rate of Fire: Single Shot

The Rescue Rail's superior, AI-intuitive targeting system provides the cyborg an edge when confronting Choicer adversaries. In all encounters when the Lifer cyborg is confronting a known Choicer target (as recognized visually, through dialogue, or via an IFF transponder), the Closer receives a +2 morale bonus on Initiative checks.

At 7th level, the Closer 's Rescue Rails are improved, inflicting 5d10 points of ballistic damage, with their range increment elongating to 120 ft.

Violent Reputation (EX): Starting at 2nd level, the Closer may add half his class level, rounded down, as a bonus on all Intimidate checks. Nobody in his or her right mind ever messes with a Lifer Closer .

Cyberframe Evolution (EX): At 4th level, the Closer undergoes a massive cybernetic reorganization, as the self-repair systems built into his cyber chassis begin a system wide system of refinements and upgrades. For a brief time, dormant nano-factories and sub-quantum fabricators hidden deep within the Closer 's cybernetic 'guts' come on line, and enter a frenzy of production. A huge amount of new mass is added, seemingly overnight.

The Lifer Closer enters a trance-state lasting 24-48 hours while his bionics upgrade themselves. At the end of this period, the cyborg becomes Size: Large. The newly empowered Closer is a 9-12 ft tall wall of ballistic plating and Kevlar pseudo-muscle; he literally transforms into a walking tank.

His lifting and carrying limits are double those of a medium creature, and he can use larger weapons than his medium sized counterparts. The Closer receives a +4 size modifier on grapple checks, but suffers a –4 size modifier to Hide checks and a –1 size penalty to Defense.

Since this is a purely mechanical upgrade, none of the Closer's clothing, weapons or gear change size, forcing the Closer to modify or replace most of his equipment once the growth spurt occurs.

The Lifer Closer's newly optimized cyber-chassis provides the cyborg with a +4 enhancement bonus to his STR score, and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. The cyborgs powerful leg muscles and pneumatic knee systems allow the creature to make incredible leaps. The Closer's maximum jumping distance is not limited by height, and he does not need to get a running start to make a long jump. If the Closer can make at least a 30 ft running start, he receives an additional +20 circumstance bonus on the Jump check.

Rescue-Fire (EX): Starting at 5th level, the Lifer Closer can vent waste heat from his onboard fusion stack, as well as utilizing newly grown fire-fog dispensers located on his chest, upper thigh and spinal plating to lay ambushes, and to decimate Choicer forces.

A number of times per day equal to one plus the Closer's CON modifier (minimum twice per day), the Closer may sheathe himself in a flaming aura by opening heat-sinks and allowing his reactor's waste heat to ignite the air around his hull. The cyborg takes no damage from becoming a flaming Lifer juggernaut. Once ignited, the Closer will continue to burn for a number of rounds equal to his CON modifier.

During this time, the Closer inflicts an additional +2d6 points of fire damage with all melee attacks and unarmed strikes. The flaming aura provides the cyborg with a +2 deflection bonus to Defense. Anyone grappling the cyborg suffers 4d6 points of fire damage each round.

Additionally, the Closer grows a set of Firefog dispensers, identical to the standard power armor component. The Closer can activate this implant at will, as a standard action. Firefog ports usually grow on the Closer's back, thighs or shoulders.

Firefog is a highly flammable chemical spray that fills the air around the cyborg and makes movement hazardous. The short-lived firefog cloud bonds with air molecules, and is so unstable that the friction created by normal movement can ignite it, turning the air within a 30 ft radius of the Closer into a lethal firestorm. A cloud of firefog dissipates in 2d6 rounds once sprayed; a wind stronger than 15 mph dissipates the cloud in a single round.

Anyone or anything moving faster than 10 ft per round within the area of a Firefog cloud will ignite the chemical. All targets within the cloud's radius take 6d6 points of fire damage. The explosion can set combustibles on fire.

Victims caught within the cloud can attempt a DC 18 REF Save to halve the damage. The Closer is immune to non-magical flame, making this weapon ideal for laying ambushes or controlling the battlefield.

Closers at this stage in their careers often find their vents flickering open, and harmless but visually spectacular wisps of plasma playing over their hulls when near known Choicers. Their cybernetics **want** to be unleashed, and look forward to violence.

Cybernetic Perfection (EX): At 8th level, the Lifer Closer's cybernetics are as good as they are ever going to be; the cyborg is a perfectly tuned, carefully maintained killing machine. The Closer becomes completely immune to critical hits, precision based additional damage, nonlethal damage and the effects of massive damage.

Deep Concealment (EX): At 10th level, a veteran Lifer Closer gains access to one of the Lifer movement's greatest tactical secrets- the ability to reshape his hulking war-form into a mundane, outwardly human shell, and walk unnoticed through checkpoints and weapon scanners.

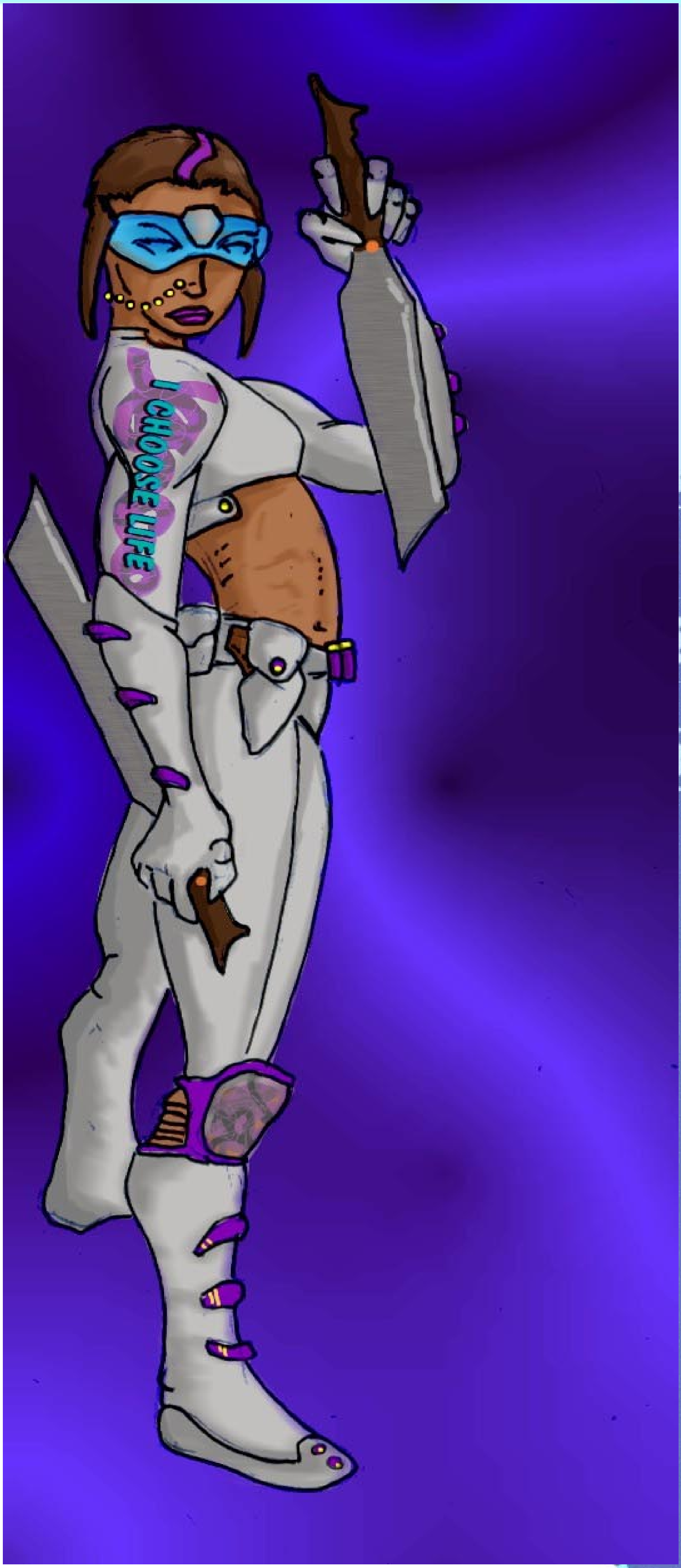
By spending an action point, the Lifer Closer can undergo an amazing transformation, retracting his obvious armor plating and integrated weapons into himself, and transforming his cyber-chassis into an artificial flesh and blood form. The cyborg can transform himself into a Medium human, of any apparent age or race, so long as it is the same gender as his original pre-conversion body. The Lifer command structure refuses to allow gender-shifting technology to be used by its troops, even though it has the capability.

While in human form, the Lifer Closer cannot use his Rescue Rails or Rescue Fire class features, but retains the physical enhancements common to all Lifer Closers. The Closer's humanoid form is a cunningly developed cybernetic analogue, and accurately simulates human functions, such as eating, waste excretion, sweating and bleeding when injured, though it remains a bio-mechanical construct.

While in human form, a 10th level Lifer Closer cannot be detected as such by conventional genetics or weapons scanners- the Closer 'reads' as an ordinary human.

If the Closer has acquired other cybernetics, they are similarly concealed. Passive cybernetic systems, such as strength enhancement or defenses, remain usable in 'human form' but integrated weapons cannot be used while in human shape.

The Closer can retain his faux human form for a number of hours equal to one plus his CON modifier (minimum two hours), making this deadly ability ideal for infiltrating fortified Choicer areas before wreaking havoc.



The Vindicator Advanced Class

"He didn't shoot Mother Teresa, he shot a mass murderer such as Saddam Hussein or Hitler. I don't even think it is accurately termed 'murder.' God is the only one who knows whether Gunn would ever have repented or if he would have killed another 5,000 babies and probably 3 or 4 more women who probably weren't Christians either."

[Shelly Shannon's] course of action was clear. Like Phinehas, and Jael, and even Samuel of the Bible, the righteous thing to do was
to meet deadly force with equally deadly force.
The babies were innocent, the abortionist was not. The choice was simple,
dead babies or a dead abortionist.
-Rev. Donald Spitz, Soldier Shelly
Website, circa early 2000

Vindicators are the healers and combat medics for the Lifer Army of God. Like their opposite numbers on the Choicer side, they blend belief with bionics, and faith with Philosophy. Vindicators aren't simply highly trained EMTs, however. They are imbued with meta-human talents that let them manipulate the raw energy of life itself. They are judges and terrorist miracle-workers, ripping the life energy from the unworthy and using it to save their wounded allies. With a thought, a psi-capable Vindicator can impose a sentence of death…. an execution that's also a promise of new life for a fallen comrade.

Profile of a Vindicator

Vindicators are a unique type of healer. They don't cower at the rear of a battle-field, tending wounded. Instead, they wade into battle as capably as any other soldier. Each throat they slit represents another chance for these medic-warriors to save an ally's life. Vindicators can transfer life energy from a victim to a patient, and though they have impressive medical skills on their own, their most impressive gifts are only activated through combat. Without death, there can be no new life. Even though Vindicators consider themselves warriors for life, they depend on death to activate their post-human talents.

The fastest path into the Vindicator Advanced Class is through the Dedicated Hero Basic Class, though other paths are possible. Many Vindicators are Strong or Fast Heroes with either a medical starting occupation or some cross class skills invested. Other Vindicators focus more on the martial aspects of the class, and prefer to play offense rather than defense.

The Vindicator in the Campaign

May 1, 2105. Beltane Night.
San Francisco, CA. Choicer Territory.

Supersonic flachettes caught the battered old suburban in the rear wheelwell, shredding the Kevlar reinforced tires and turning the drive axel into chaff. The driver did his best, but at ninety miles per hour, keeping control was a pipe dream. The suburban lurched drunkenly towards the freeway's raised concrete embankments, and he overcorrected. The van flipped, rolled, went airborne, sparks flying like dragon's breath from the shredded rear under carriage. A rusting and pitted bumper covered with sunfaded anti-abortion holofoils and stickers flew wildly off into the night, gouging deep divots out of the freeway tarmac as it bounced.

The suburban slammed to a stop, rolled once more, and sprawled half way across the opposite lane of traffic like a dying beast. Anti-impact gelatin leaked from the passenger compartment like syrupy blue blood, and slivers of safety glass rained down in a strange snowfall. The few other cars out on the holiday night swerved around the wreckage, or quickly reversed when they saw what was descending from the sky. A pair of Choicer Atlantas, their jump jets humming menacingly, weapons primed and ready. Their chameleonic paint kept the two suits of powered armor exactly the same color as the humid night; as they landed near the wrecked *suburban, they were only darker black shapes against a summer-hot black night.*

The first Atalnta approached cautiously, her armored footfalls almost silent along the freeway's tarmac. The pilot raised her bulky left gauntlet, reading her energy weapons, knowing they could penetrate the fallen vehicle, no matter how heavily armored it was. A few steps behind her, just far enough away that they wouldn't both fall to the same burst, if it came to that, her companion covered her, kneeling to stabilize her shot with her wrist mounted rail guns.

Inside the upturned van, Switchblade '73 wiped the viscous anti-impact gel out of her eyes, blinked twice and tried to understand why the world was upside down. Thirty seconds ago, everything was fine. They were three miles out from the Chelsea Square abortuary, which was in flaming ruins, just like it should have been. Nobody got hurt, not even them, and the mission looked clear. They were racing towards the extraction point, when…. Switchblade groaned as she remembered. She shielded her battered eyes, and stared out through the starred front window, easily making out the menacing, jet black shapes of the Choicer's war machines. Seeing the movement inside the passenger cab, the pair of Shells turned up their loud speakers to full, and screamed for her to come out with hands up. The cute little Lifer's eardrums rattled, and she winced.

The screamed warning brought the other two soldiers sharing the upturned suburban around. In the passenger seat beside her, her father stirred. There was blood on his forehead, and he looked too dazed to key in his own post-human talents. The skinny, beak-nosed man in the black and purple combat armor shook his head to clear it, and as always, his first thought was for the girls. "Switch? Narnie? You two – you two still in this?"

Switchblade reached a gloved hand over and squeezed her father's hand, while trying to disentangle herself from the seatbelt with her other hand. She groaned a bit, but nodded. "Right here, daddy. Narnie?"

And the shells were coming closer. The lead pilot was shouting for them to throw out any weapons.

"Narnie?"

Nothing from the rear of the suburban, where the gene-modified lion-girl had been sitting, deep inside her mother's Bible, like she always did after a mission. Nothing, not even the pained moans, or labored breathing that Switchblade '73 knew all too well from other wounded Lifers she treated. Thirteen year old Child Narnia was as quiet as the grave, and Rescuer Daddy and his metahuman daughter turned simultaneously. He paid a steep price in agony for his efforts, realizing that at the very least, one of his collar bones had been shattered. He didn't care.

"Narnie?"

"-OUT OF THE VEHICLE WITH YOUR HANDS UP! WE WILL OPEN-"

"Narnie?"

"Dad…. They're…..she's….Oh Jesus, Daddy she's…."

And he shook with impotent rage, pressed against his seat by the rapidly hardening impact jelly, his own pain forgotten. It had a certain stupid simplicity, a clarity that he couldn't ignore. Child Narnia always sat in the back seat, and those goddamned Choosers had hit them from behind. Why wouldn't a stray round hit his youngest daughter? Why shouldn't she pay for her commitment to the pre-born with her life, before she even kissed a boy for real?

"-FIRE IF YOU DON"T COME OUT NOW! ONE CHANCE! COME OUT!"

And Switchblade was shrieking at them, "SHUT UP! We've got wounded in here! We *can't move her!"*

That shut them up for a few seconds, and Switchblade sagged against the seatbelts. Tears welled up under the bulbous blue combat goggles she always wore, fogging them into uselessness, and she pushed them up onto her forehead. She looked over at her father, her commander in the Army of God, stricken.

"Daddy…."

"Switch, we…. She's gone, there's nothing…. I don't want…."

She knew her father was close to giving up, bowing down, and letting the Choosers have them, all so his older daughter wouldn't die too, on this desolate, 3 am freeway. She closed her eyes tight, and when she opened them, her pupils had disappeared, replaced by roiling, black-light energy.

His voice was soft, an old man's suddenly. "Even you can't save her."

She hated the quavering weakness in his voice, nothing like the proud, fully pro-life icon she had grown up idolizing. She put some of that same strong Christian strength into her own voice.

"I can, Daddy. I know I can. But I've- but we've – got to be quick about it."

Her eyes glanced towards the Shells. One was approaching closer, and even through the cracked windshield, Switchblade could spot the pilot's indecision, as the designated rules of engagement warred with her own sense of compassion. Switchblade knew how she could kill this one.

"Daddy, don't let the Choosers see you, but I need you to reach one of my knives. I can't get to it myself."

Her next words were a low and quiet vow, to herself as much as to her shaking father. "I can save her. I know I can."

And as soon as her father did as he was told, and her machete's textured hilt touched her gloved palm, she believed it herself.

Vindicators accompany Lifer squads into the field, working tirelessly to keep fellow rescuers alive. Under ideal conditions, a Vindicator medic is assigned to each mission-ready Lifer squad, but in the resource-strapped AOG, things are rarely 'ideal.' The presence of a Vindicator medic is a profound morale booster to the already courageous, highly motivated Lifer soldiers. Like any other army, the AOG knows that a good combat medic is a squad's best friend, and these blood-stained combat medics are a welcome sight in any Lifer unit.

Vindicators often act as squad leaders or second-in-command. They tend to be more perceptive and better educated than the ordinary grunts, with a better grasp of tactics and asymmetric warfare. Even better, they're well liked and trusted by the men and women under their command. Capturing Vindicators alive was a priority for Choicer intelligence agencies during the War. Because of their leadership ability and general level of trust, most Vindicators were potential storehouses of information. Vindicators often form the link between several discrete AOG cells; if one is turned, their captors can potentially bring down dozens of other terrorists.

After Wars End, many Vindicators became community leaders and activists. Their influence outside the Lifer community is limited at best. Most Choicers, especially veterans who've faced a Vindicator in combat, despise them. They are reviled as energy vampires and psychic rapists, and many Choicers still smolder at the fact the class was not declared, en masse, war criminals by the Treaty of Boston. Still, retired Vindicators hold great influence over the modern Lifer community, and a new generation of young post-humans has embraced the challenge of the role.

Requirements:
To qualify to become a Vindicator, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +3
Skills: Intimidate 4 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, Sense Motive 2 ranks, Treat Injury 8 ranks
Feats: Iron Will, Surgery
Special: The Vindicator must have an allegiance to the Lifer AOG or to a similar cause, or to a specific Lifer unit or strike team.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Vindicator advanced class.

Hit Die

The Vindicator gains d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Vindicators are tough, dedicated frontline warriors, but impressive as their combat skills are, they lack the tank like durability and earth-shaking firepower of the Closers.

Action Points

The Vindicator gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Vindicator's class skills are as follows.

Computer Use (INT), Concentration (CON), Craft (pharmaceutical, visual art) (INT), Diplomacy (CHA), Drive (DEX), Intimidate (CHA), Knowledge (current events, history, physical sciences, streetwise, tactics, theology & philosophy) (INT), Pilot (DEX), Read/Write Language, Research (INT), Sense Motive (WIS), Speak Language, Spot (WIS), Survival (WIS), Treat Injury (WIS)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4+ INT Modifier

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Vindicator receives a bonus feat, which must be chosen from the following list.

Aircraft Operation, Armor Proficiency (any), Armored Survivor, Combat Expertise, Cleave, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Cover, Deceptive, Decorated Veteran, Dodge, Elite Clearance, Grateful Patients, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Medical Expert, Military Chaplin, Power Attack, Squad Leader, Techno-medic, Trustworthy, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

Table: The Vindicator Advanced Class

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+2	+0	Fast Healing 1, Vindictive Touch	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+3	+0	Lifepool, Judgment Blades	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+3	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+4	+1	Ghost Surgery	+2	+1
5th	+3	+3	+4	+1	Fast Healing 3, Vindictive Aura	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+5	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+5	+2	Mercy Revoked	+4	+2
8th	+6	+4	+6	+2	Web of Judgment	+4	+2
9th	+6	+4	+6	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+5	+7	+3	Fast Healing 5, Blood for Blood	+5	+3

A Vindicator can also choose any Lifer feat for which he meets the prerequistes.

Fast Healing (EX): Even without consciously attempting to do so, a Vindicator can absorb biological and spiritual energy from the world around him. This constant influx of energy grants the Vindicator phenomenal natural healing talents. A first level Vindicator gains Fast Healing 1 as an extraordinary quality. This improves to Fast Healing 3 at 5th level, and a 10th level Vindicator gains Fast Healing 5.

Vindictive Touch (SU): Even a neophyte Vindicator can steal energy from enemies with a touch, and use it to empower himself. A first level Vindicator can steal small amounts of bio-energy from others, and draw strength from it. With a successful touch attack against any living creature, the Vindicator causes that creature to become *fatigued* for a number of minutes equal to his CHA modifier (minimum one minute). Unlike conventional *fatigue*, this ability will not make an already *fatigued* creature *exhausted*, and the fatigue vanishes completely once the effect's duration ends.

Each time you render a creature *fatigued* with your touch, you receive a +1 enhancement bonus to STR, which lasts for 1 minute. If you touch and *fatigue* multiple creatures during this period, the effects are cumulative.

Conversely, if you are *fatigued or exhausted* when you use this feat, each successful touch attack is treated as 8 hours of sleep or rest. This unnatural burst of energy has no effect on the recovery of spells, spell slots or psionic abilities.

Action Enhancement: *By spending an action point, the Vindicator can increase this power's effectiveness. While enhanced, the Vindictive Touch renders targets exhausted and each touch provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength if the victim has a pro-choice or similar allegiance or if the victim has ever performed or undergone an abortion. This enhancement lasts for a number of hours equal to the Vindicator's CHA modifier (minimum one hour).*

Lifepool (SU): Starting at second level, the Vindicator's energy transfer talents full awaken. The Vindicator forms a psychic link to all living creatures on the battle-field, enemy and ally alike, and begins exploring the ways in which their life energy interacts. Starting at second level, the Vindicator begins accumulating a pool of life energy, stolen from those he slays in battle, which he can use to heal allies.

For every ten points of damage the Vindicator personally inflicts with an unarmed strike or melee weapon, the Vindicator gains a single hit point, which fills the Vindicator's 'lifepool'. There is no maximum limit to the number of hit points the Vindicator can store in his lifepool; once acquired, they remain until healed. The Vindicator can expend stored hitpoints to heal his own injuries, in which case tapping the lifepool is considered a free action, which can only be performed on the Vindicator's turn. The Vindicator can draw on any amount of stored HP he feels is necessary, but cannot increase his hit points past their full normal maximum.

The Vindicator can also choose to expend hit points stored in the Lifepool to heal a creature by touch. Doing so is a standard action, which provokes attacks of opportunity. The same rules apply when the Vindicator chooses to heal others as when the Vindicator chooses to heal himself.

Limitation: *The Vindicator cannot use the Lifepool ability to heal anyone who has a pro-choice or similar allegiance, nor can they heal anyone who has ever performed an abortion, though they can psionically heal someone who has undergone one.*

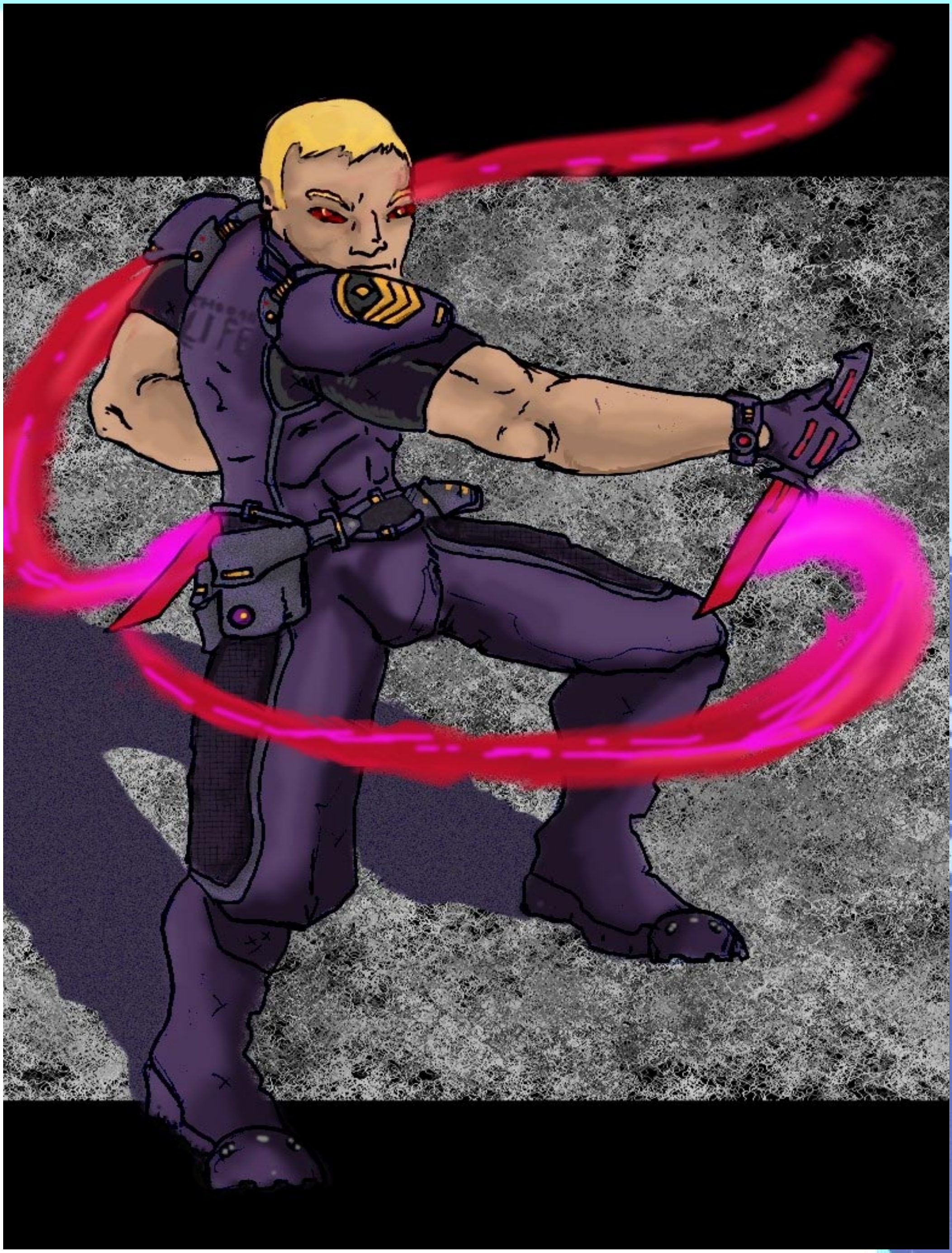
Judgment Blades (EX): A Vindicator's training emphasizes melee combat and knife-fighting, as close-in weapons are best for stealing and redirecting life energy. Vindicators are among the few Lifer troops to ever learn Covenant blade techniques.

Starting at 2nd level, the Vindicator may add ½ his class level (rounded down) as an insight bonus on all Bluff checks made to feint in combat and disarm attempts, assuming the Vindicator is wielding some form of edged weapon.

Ghost Surgery (SU): A Vindicator is as good with a scalpel as he is with a combat blade. Using his innate bio-energy manipulation powers, a Vindicator can phase through living tissue, healing (or destroying) organs and viscera beneath without ever scratching the surface.

The Vindicator's unique talents mean he can phase his hands and small surgical tools into a patients body, performing surgery without breaking the skin. The Vindicator can perform surgery in half the usual time, and his patients are not *fatigued* after the procedure is complete.

The Vindicator is also adept at using this ability in combat. A number of times per day equal to his CHA modifier (minimum once daily), the Vindicator can partially dematerialize his melee weapons and striking surfaces. The Vindicator ignores natural and equipment bonuses to Defense when striking unarmed or with a melee weapon. This ability remains in effect for one minute once activated.



***Action Enhancement:** By spending an action point when activating the Ghost Surgery ability, the Vindicator can use his phasing ability to inflict incredible damage by phasing and solidifying a weapon inside the wound track. Any weapon used by the Vindicator to make a ghost touch attack has its critical threat range increased by one. This enhancement lasts for the duration of the Ghost Surgery effect.*

Vindictive Aura (SU): At fifth level, the Vindicator's Vindictive Touch ability improves to the point he can manifest a life-sapping, entropic aura around himself. As a standard action, the Vindicator can manifest his Vindictive Aura, which extends in a 30 ft radius from his body. All living creatures within range of the entropic aura must succeed at a WILL Save (DC 12 + the Vindicator's CHA modifier) or become *fatigued*. Each creature within the aura who is fatigued provides the Vindicator with a +1 enhancement bonus to his Strength score. This effect remains for one minute.

A creature that saves against this effect cannot be affected by the Vindicator's aura or his Vindictive Touch ability for 24 hours. The Vindicator can expend action points to enhance this ability just like he can his Vindictive Touch ability.

The Vindicator chooses which creatures within range to effect, and can exclude allies if he so chooses. Manifesting or dropping the entropic field is a standard action.

Mercy Revoked (SU): The Vindicator knows the emotional effect his healing talents have on those he treats, and likewise realizes that wounds that don't heal carry a special terror all their own. A number of times per day equal to his CHA modifier (minimum once daily), a seventh level Vindicator can attempt a ranged touch attack with a 30 ft max range against any living target. If the attack is successful, a lance of cold blue and purple light leaps from the Vindicator to his target.

This entropic energy-pulse disrupts the natural flow of life energy within the target. A target struck by this energy beam cannot recover lost hit points, by any means, for 24 hours. Natural healing (including Fast Healing), medical assistance, healing provided by drugs, psionic or magical healing are all useless for the duration of the disruption.

This effect saps the victim's vitality. The target is considered *fatigued* for the duration of the effect. If already *fatigued*, the target becomes *exhausted* instead.

Web of Judgment (SU): Starting at 8th level, a Vindicator can manifest an invisible psionic web, which binds the life energies of all living creatures in the battlespace. At the beginning of the each combat encounter, the Vindicator can declare a specific allegiance (usually the Choicer cause or the Covenant). Any damage inflicted upon the Vindicator is transmitted to all creatures sharing that allegiance within 60 ft.

For each two points of damage the Vindicator suffers, all nearby members of the hated allegiance suffer a point of damage. This damage is psionic in nature, and ignores a target's Damage Resistance or Hardness (if any). Targeted creatures may attempt a WILL Save (DC 12 + the Vindicator's CHA modifier) to halve the incoming damage.

Action Enhancement: *By spending an action point, the Vindicator use risky, suicidal tactics to annihilate his enemy. For one minute after expending the action point, if the Vindicator inflicts damage on himself, it is transferred through the Web of Judgment link on a two for one basis. Thus, if the Vindicator inflicts 6 points of damage on himself after spending an action point, all target creatures within range would suffer 12 points of damage.*

Blood for Blood (SU): A 10th level Vindicator can slay an enemy and use the fallen foe's spiritual energy to resurrect the honored dead of his own nation. In order to activate this ability, the Vindicator must personally slay a living creature using either an unarmed strike or a melee weapon. The Vindicator can have help in slaying the target (or targets), but he must be the one who delivers the death blow, or inflicts a *coup de gras.*

Once a creature is slain, its amount of Hit Die enters a special Lifepool, which fills with every creature the Vindicator kills. Creatures with fractional Hit Dice do not increase the Vindicator's special Lifepool. The Vindicator can tap this energy to resurrect fallen allies. If the Vinidicator's special Lifepool is filled to at least twice the slain creature's Hit Die or total character level, the Vindicator can return the slain person to life.

(For example, if the Vindicator is attempting to resurrect a slain Lifer soldier (total character level 13), he would have to have personally slain at least 26 Hit Die worth of living creatures within the previous 24 hours.)

Doing so requires the Vindicator to remain in physical contact with his slain ally for at least one minute. A character *resurrected* in this manner loses a level upon returning to life. Once expended in this manner, stored Hit Die within the Vindicator's special Lifepool are lost. If the Vindicator does not use the stored life energy within 24 hours, it vanishes without effect.

Limitation: *The same limitation which applies to the Lifepool ability also applies to this special power. The Vindicator cannot resurrect pro-choice creatures.*

Intangibles: Informers and Iconoclasts

The decades after the Treaty of Boston are a period of uneasy détente- neither side believes the Abortion War has ended, just that it has cooled slightly. Political backstabbing has replaced urban warfare as the dominant tactic. During this period of Cold War, both sides have consolidated their hold over their nations and begun building even more divergent cultures, but at the same time, the two nations have begun to fear and demonize outsiders and heretics within their own ranks.

The Choicer intelligence community has had great success in infiltrating the Lifer Enclaves, and most Choicer spies have a decent list of Lifer contacts and snitches. The question becomes, of course, how much to trust a double agent who is already betraying his own people. Even more insidious is a long-term Choicer plan to infiltrate and eventually control (or at least steer) the Lifer movement as a whole. Choicer money, funneled through a bewildering maze of dummy corporations and kickbacks, funds several moderate Lifer groups, and uses the Lifer populace's devotion to its cause to push through social initiatives the Choicers want to see succeed.

By framing a controversial issue in terms of how it either acts to end abortion, or in terms of how it harms the Choicer nation, these faux-Lifer groups can push through the initiatives the Choicer government wants to succeed. The Woven Circle is willing to make minor sacrifices and suffer temporary setbacks in pursuit of a long term goal, and using faux-Lifer figureheads to spread subtly pro-Choicer memes throughout the Lifer nation is considered both excellent long term strategy and a way to subtly de-escalate the violence against Choicers.

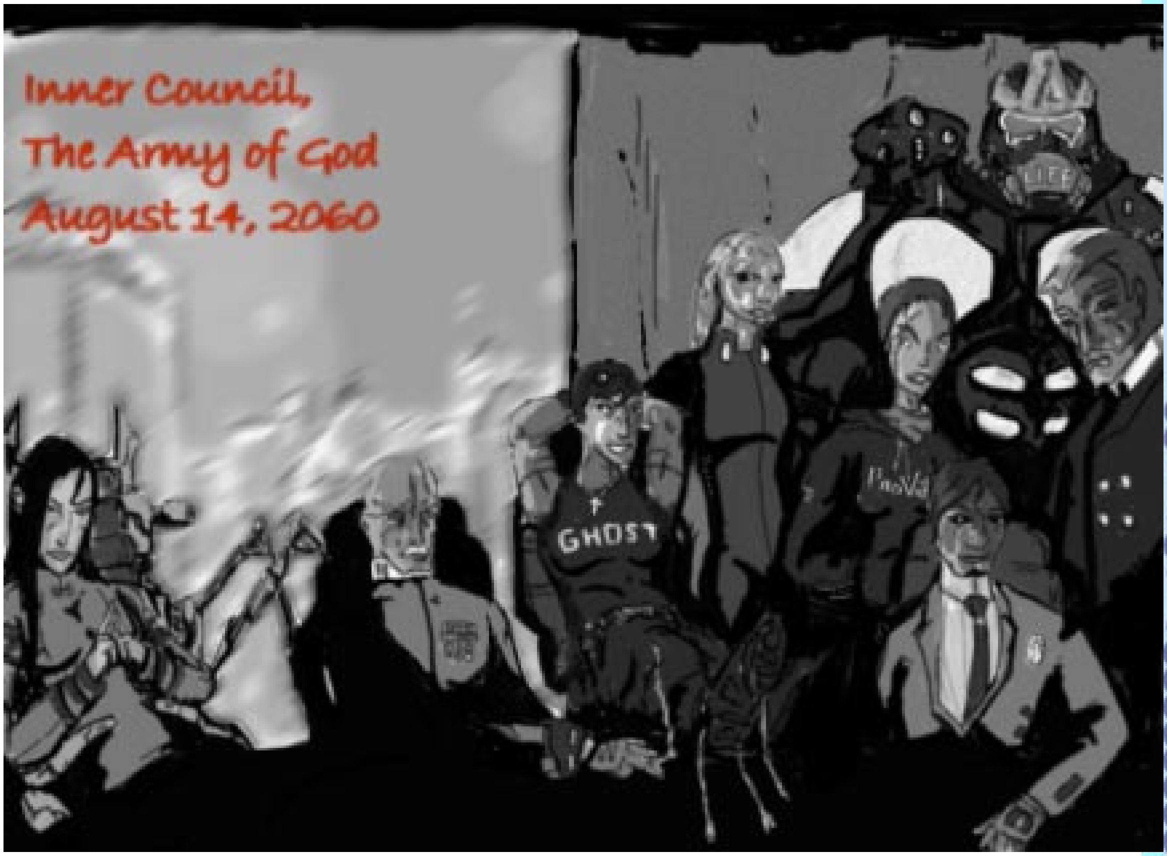
Even better, each time a Lifer blogger exposes one of the faux-Lifer organizations, true Lifer leaders, especially those friendly with the exposed group, have their "Lifer credentials" called into question.

New pseudo-Lifer groups are created regularly, as older groups are exposed by Lifer bloggers or their financial backers come to light. The Lifers refer to these groups as "lifer-in-name-only", or by the acronym LINO, which has mutated, like slang tends to, into the word 'lean'. Many moderate Lifer groups, like RESCUE International, are suspected of being 'lean', and are lambasted for their lack of conviction by hard liner media figures. "Lean" is a profound insult in Lifer culture, calling a citizen's courage and conviction into question. Usually when one Lifer calls another that, gunplay follows.

The Choicers have a similar but much milder term: 'monotheistic'. To a Choicer, someone is monotheistic when they haven't been able to fully shake off the memes and cultural stamps of 'monotheistic', Christian society. A Choicer who celebrates Christmas instead of Yule, or a Choicer who fits too neatly into a 20th Century sex role, or who is simply seen as too Christianized by their peers might be called monotheistic. More generally, the term is used simply as an insult, suggesting the person in question is barbaric, unclean or uncultured. Other 'less committed' Covenant citizens are mocked with the nickname 'orange arms', a reference to a variant style of bionics used by Neo-Witch Midwives who choose not to perform abortions.

IV. Garden of Gethsemane

January 20, 2061.
Boston, MA.



She's been beaten thoroughly, by experts. Ghost Boss's eyes are black and swollen shut, and she can only see out of her left eye, just a little bit. The other one is closed up tight. Her nose is broken, and blood is trickling down her throat with every ragged breath. She knows at least three ribs are cracked, and maybe one caught some lung. But she's still sneering through the blood and the pain, glaring with her one good eye.

She knows her life is going to end soon, and in the way she figured it probably would. She's chained to the floor of the empty metal room, her powers locked out by the metal collar choking her. The restraint collar hums painfully, its incessant pitch like the ache of an abscessed tooth. Cut off from her metahuman self, Ghost Boss feels slow and stupid, as weak as she was years ago, back when she was just Tara Brownlee, back before she joined the Army. Before she became a soldier for the preborn. But powers or not she remains a soldier. She uses her hate like a crutch.

Ellen Dacoveney squats in front of her broken soldier, unflappable and collected as ever. There is a machine pistol dangling from Ellen's manicured hands, in opposition to the elegant silk of her suit. Her guards, including the woman made from orange polymer stand just behind their mistress, similar machine pistols in their hand. Even though their prisoner is restrained by whining machines, they don't relax.

Ellen sighs and shakes her head, like a teacher correcting a student, "Four and a half more years, Ghost Boss. That's all we needed. 1653 more days and everything would have been perfect. "

"Our army would have been 100% combat ready, our technology- we could have won the War before we fired a single shot, but you and your..... monstrosities needed your symbol. You needed the first shot fired to be on the Roe anniversary. Don't you realize that that's

exactly what the pro-abortionists were expecting?"

Ghost Boss spits on the dull gunmetal floor, and doesn't back down, staring down the aristocratic blond woman. She catches sight of her battered reflection in a pool of blackening blood. Her voice is hoarse and thirsty, "You're the one who doesn't get it, you fucking rich bitch. How many babies are gonna get killed in the next four years, huh? So fuck you, you got your army already- I know 'cause I recruited most of those fuckers myself. You're just enjoying playing politician too much to actually use 'em!"

Ellen's eyes narrow. She wants to hit the chained woman in front of her. But she controls herself, refusing to surrender the initiative.

And Ghost Boss won't shut up. She knows she's going to die, but she'll say her piece first.

"And hey, I got my symbol. There's no way you're gonna recall Cassidy in time. So that army's finally going to get to do what we've been trainin' for and save some babies. So fuck you twice, bitch."

Ellen rises and turns away. With a confident, familiar motion, she ratchets the slide on the machine pistol. A red tell-tale on the barrel flickers to life. The weapon is live.

"All that power and you never learned basic tactics. You don't attack until you are certain you can win. Rescuing a planet isn't time for halfway, for almost, for maybe. Because of your half baked theo-political idiocy that's exactly the position I find myself in now. I'm mired in 'maybes'. Maybe we'll still redeem America. Or maybe APEX will put a bullet in my brain three days from now."

Ellen turns and raises the gun, holding the barrel a few inches from Ghost Boss's forehead. Sweat beads down Ghost Boss' forehead, running in rivulets through the dried blood on her cheeks. The two women lock eyes. They duel one last time.

"So you're right; you get your symbol, your shot heard round the world. And maybe you just cost me the War. And maybe you'll have the million dead babies your impatience murdered dragging you down to hell, you shortsighted fanatic."

Ghost Boss snarls, "Fuck you three times, you apologist cunt."

The machine pistol kicks softly, firing three rounds so quickly it sounds like a single shot. Ghost Boss dies in milliseconds, slumping forward in her restraints.

Just to be sure, Ellen Dacoveney empties another short burst into the dead woman's skull, obliterating all human features. She tells her self she didn't enjoy it.

Ellen hands the machine pistol to the orange skinned woman, without having to look backwards to know she's standing there. Ellen is staring at the carcass intently, watching nearly black blood swirl towards a recessed drain on the floor.

The orange woman speaks, in the slow, garbled mush of someone born with severe birth defects. Her voice is almost human, "I could scramble a hunter/recov team and have it airborne in under thirty minutes. We could use men from Ninth Life, maybe; they've never fancied the Ghosts, after all."

Ellen shakes her head, "No point. Cassidy could be anywhere in the US by now. She knows that, and she'll have told him not to hit any abortuary he has personal history with. Dense as he is, even he's smart enough to follow that instruction..... we won't find him, not with less than 50 hours until the Roe celebrations begin...."

Ellen takes a long, calming breath, and stares sadly down at the corpse. "No, she gets her War, and it's up to win it for her. Goddamn it all."

Ellen ticks off items, as she remembers them, already forcing the murder out of her mind. That's today's business, and she worries about tomorrow's.

"First order of business. We've lost Ghost Boss, and while that's unfortunate, she's not irreplaceable. Move Choir II into command of the Ghosts. Than I want a forensic body-harvester team up here and at work before her Skane Organelles necrose. Maybe we can salvage a workable genentic template from this debacle.

Than tell Emir I want a best guess pysch-profile on Cassidy, where he's likely to pop up, which clinic he's most likely to hit. We're going to need to decide if we reinforce or just take advantage of the distraction. Soon as the fool gets killed, I want troops in position to hammer whatever Choicer forces do manage to finish him. "

And the orange woman's liquid plastic face breaks into an expression that would be curiosity on a normal woman. Again, she speaks in that Downs Syndrome voice, "You don't suppose he'll manage to escape? The man was a survivor even before he was 'Chained."

Ellen snorts derision. "That man's been on a suicide run for years now. No, he's going to be perfectly content to die on Roe-day. I just hope he manages to take a handful of the more interesting Choicer Powereds with him."

She steps out of the chamber as the blast doors open for her. Her orange-skinned protector follows attentively, her thumbs running along the barrel of the pistol in her hands unconsciously.

She waits for more orders, and Ellen gives them, "As of this second the AOG is on a war footing, and I want status updates from unit commanders within the next forty five minutes. I want to know who's ready to mobilize and explanations of why not from any stragglers. We need at least 55% of our forces forward deployed within 24 hours of that moron's suicide charge..... and I want Boston within six hours of "GO". Boston's always been our city, and damned if I'll surrender it to the inevitable Choicer counterpunch."

"What about your Artemis? Do you believe she's ready for combat?"

"She's going to have to be. She's taking command of the AOG in Boston. We need a capitol. And an decisive early victory will do wonders for morale. Ours and hers."

Ellen ticks off more items, thinking fast and talking faster. With gestures in the nanite-laced air, she calls up encrypted info windows, checking deployments, hands moving rapidly in virtual space, coordinating impossible logistics.

"Supply lines and secure communication. That's MOI's department, but I want full combat readiness in 18 hours and a meet and greet with our logistics arm in 24. Tell Emir to wake up our deep sleepers; set the alarm for the morning of the 23rd. Next-"

It hurts her to pause, to reflect even for a moment. Ellen stops her frantic, obsessive motion and looks at her most loyal subordinate. She lays a hand on the translucent woman's shoulder and takes a second to compose herself. She is reflected in the alien creature's amber eyes.

"Next..... for the duration of this crisis: I'm removing you from my protective detail, Jelly. You're going to watch the boy. Keep the Choosers and their guns away from Fairfax."

"You have my word I shall."

"Never doubted it. Now, fifth we're going to…"

Famous Lifer Units

The Lifer AOG is surprisingly informal, with individual commanders having wide latitude and decision making powers. An AOG sergeant has the kind of tactical authority that's only reserved for the senior officers of other forces. The Lifer military began as a group of 'leaderless resistance' cells, small groups of like minded believers working independent on one another. As the War drug on, the leaderless AOG coalesced into a more traditional force, with defined lines of command and supply.

However, the Lifer military never forgot its maverick beginnings. Individual units vary wildly in style, tactics, operational traditions and levels of supply. Some of the most famous units, showcasing the diversity of the faction, are described below.

New Affiliation: Baby's Listening
Official Designation: 13th Pro-life Signals Intelligence Squad
Formation Year: 2059
Motto: "Let All Ears Harken"

Baby's Listening owes its celebrity status to the exploits of the daring men and women who made up the unit- former military SIGINT experts, hackers and brush pilots who made a career out of doing the impossible and unlikely. Baby's Listening earned a reputation as the best AWACs operators and electronic warfare operators in the Lifer nation, a feat made all the more impressive given the outdated, surplus or just plain scratch built planes and sensor gear the earliest members of the unit had to work with.

Baby's Listening made do with converted civilian jets and ultra lights, modified with military grade radar jammers and sensor modules for the first few years of the War. Causalities were, as to be expected, massive, as garage-modified Gulfstream and Twinstar commercial planes were forced to go up against modern Shells and anti-aircraft defenses, but the men and women of Baby's Listening didn't let that stop them from "bringin' the good news to the troops."

Once the Tigerfly power armor was introduced, Baby's Listening took to the new technology with relish. Mission survivability increased exponentially, and morale, always high shot through the roof. Armed with their Tigerflies, the members of Baby's Listening could boast there wasn't anything occurring in their battlespace they weren't aware of. The current leader of the Lifer nation, Fairfax Dacoveney, earned his stripes flying with Baby's Listening, and was decorated multiple times during his time with the unit.

Baby's Listening

Affiliation Prerequistes: AWACs Operator, Gearhead, Repair 4 ranks

Affiliation Benefits: You are well trained in maintaining and upgrading aircraft and power armor even without proper supply lines. When using the Repair skill to jury rig a suit of power armor or aircraft, if you beat the Repair check DC by more than 10 points, your repairs are treated as permanent, normal repairs, not jury-rigged field repairs.

New Affiliation: Division B.R.I.C.K.
Official Designation: Acronym stands for "Babies Rescued Through Increased Cost of Killing"
Formation Year: Mid 2000s, reactivated 2062
Motto: None

The modern Division BRICK drew its inspiration from early, ardent members of the 20th Century Army of God, taking it's name from an early tactical doctrine promulgated in the original edition of Closed. Under the leadership of several young activists, termite pranksters and self-taught demolitions experts, Division BRICK took it upon itself to end abortion by destroying the tools used to perform them. Early BRICK activists used tactics including everything from gluing clinics locks shut, stealing or contaminating procedure rooms, fire bombings and anthrax scares- even the mutilation of doctor's hands so they could never again hold a curette.

Early BRICKers did everything short of killing, a tradition followed by War-era BRICK soldiers. The first generation of Lifer saboteurs was so brutally effective that when Neo-Witch Midwives first began performing abortions, they did so with implanted nano-tools which could never be stolen or destroyed. Forced to change their tactics, War-era members of Division BRICK developed some of the most effective computer viruses and nano-toxins to date. In addition to its work as freelance saboteurs, troublemakers and bomb smiths, BRICKers serve the Army as technosavants and R & D staff.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Cautious, either Gearhead or Stealthy, *Pyromaniac,* Demolitions 4 ranks, Craft (either chemical, mechanical or electronic) 4 ranks, Knowledge: streetwise 1 rank,

Affiliation Benefits: You are extremely skilled at placing explosives with the Demolition skill. Anytime you fail a Demolitions skill check by 10 or more, rather than suffering an immediate detonation, you may spend an action point to negate the worst effects of the failure. The check fails, but does not explode while being placed or constructed. You gain no other Affiliation Benefits of the action point when it is used this way.

If placing an explosive device to destroy a structure, if you roll a Demolitions skill check result of 35 or higher, the explosive inflicts quadruple damage.

New Affiliation: The Garbagemen
Official Designation: None, unofficial unit
Formation Year: 2057
Motto: None

Our Most Dread Sovereign Lord God requires that whosoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. Not out of hatred of you, but out of love for the persons you exterminate, we are forced to take arms against you. You shall not be tortured at our hands. Vengeance belongs to God only. However, execution is rarely gentle."

-Declaration of War, Closed: 99 Covert Ways to Stop Abortion, circa 2000 (author unknown)

The Garbagemen were a loose collection of sociopaths and terrorists too extreme and brutal even for the hardliners in the mainstream Lifer army. Responsible for hundreds of deaths, and just as many atrocities during the War, most captured members of the Garbagemen were tried for war crimes and executed when the Treaty of Boston was signed. The Garbagemen took their name from their self imposed mission- taking out the garbage by killing abortion providers, medics and clinic staff.

While other Lifers would accept a wounded or captured abortionist's surrender, leaving the matter of conversion to interrogators and re-education camps behind the lines, and would hold clinic staff less culpable then the doctors themselves, Garbagemen made no such fine distinctions. A babykiller was a babykiller, and babykillers died. Anyone fighting on the Choicer side, including allied Fed-Gov troops, was just as much a baby killer, and they died just as hard.

Worse, while other Lifers were content to kill with bombs and bullets- quick, soldierly deaths no more violent or prolonged than was absolutely necessary, Garbagemen seemed to thrive on torture and prolonged execution. Garbagemen volunteered for execution details and behind the lines ops, filming their kills and trading them among themselves. Garbageman helmet footage, with its brutality and sadism, has become a favorite among the post-War necro-Lifer underground.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Stranglehold, Stealthy, Intimidate 4 ranks

Affiliation Benefits: When attacking with an unarmed strike or any small or medium melee weapon, if you beat the target's Defense score by 7 or more points, you inflict an especially agonizing wound. Your target must succeed at a FORT Save (DC 12 + the damage inflicted) or be *shaken* for one round. This ability only affects humanoids with reasonably normal anatomies, and is ineffective against any creature immune to pain effects.

New Affiliation: The Killdevils
Official Designation: Coalition For Life Executive Protective Detail
Formation Year: 2060
Motto: "Never Fail, Never Forget, Never Slacken"

The Killdevils are an elite security detail, trained to the same impossibly high standards as their rivals in the American Secret Service and Choicer Bedchamber Guards. Killdevil recruits are drawn from the countries best, most decorated police and military officers, and many are recruited from the Secret Service. All Killdevil recruits are required to be utterly committed pro-lifers, with a long family history in the momenent. A potential without a father or grandfather in the movement won't be accepted for recruit training, nor would anyone whose 'Lifer credentials' are strained by membership in moderate groups like RESCUE International. New converts are similarly excluded from the protective detail.

Killdevils are extensively trained in anti-powered and anti-shell combat, armed and unarmed killing, security and counter surveillance. They are familiar sites at Lifer political rallies and political events, and accompany Fairfax Dacoveney and the other members of the Lifer high command everywhere they go. The image of a stoic, highly disciplined Killdevil in a finely tailored, armored crimson and ebony business suit has become an icon of 22nd Century action movies and techno-thrillers.

Affiliation Prerequistes: At least one level of the Bodyguard advanced class. Spot 12 Ranks, Alertness, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, either Anti-Powered Warfare or Precise Shot

Affiliation Benefits: Killdevil training focuses on protecting the VIP by killing or incapacitating threats quickly and efficiently. The Killdevil receives a +1 competence bonus on all ranged attack and damage rolls when within 30 ft of a designated VIP.

New Affiliation: The K-T Innkeepers
Official Designation: Correctional Custody / Security Division, Kansas Relocation Camp
Formation Year: 2064
Motto: "Sternness and Compassion In Equal Measure"

During the first years of the Abortion War, the highly mobile, stunningly aggressive Army of God made huge territorial gains. Within a few months, the Lifer Army had achieved total control over huge tracts of 'red state' America. The citizens of captured cities, even ordinary pro-choicers, were mostly allowed to go on with their lives as best they could under martial law. However, captured Choicer and Fed-Gov troops, metahumans (including civilians with Powers), and most importantly, Neo-Witch priestesses and abortion providers were handled differently.

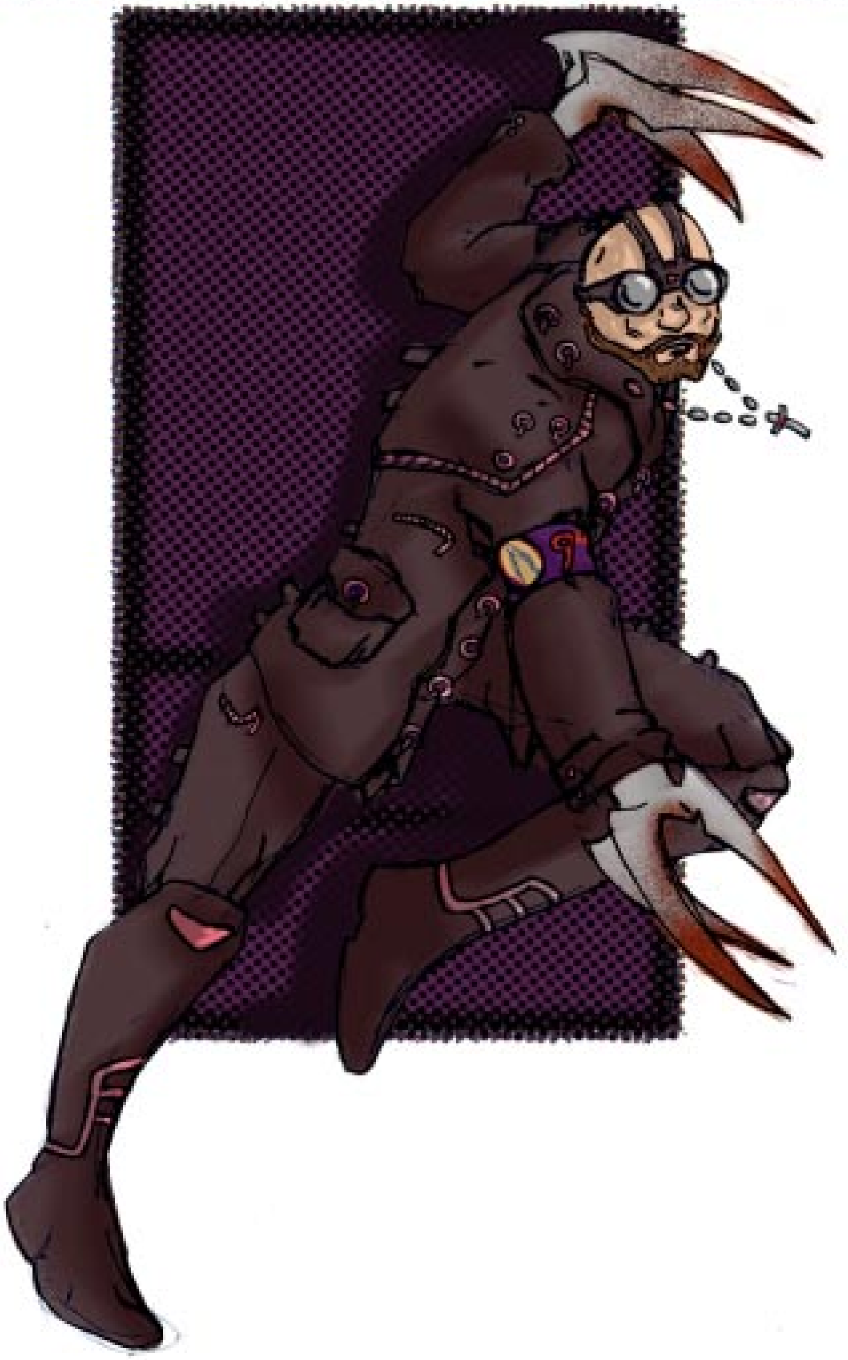
All too many, especially in the chaotic early days of the war, faced summary execution. The luckier ones got a bullet to the back of the skull; the unfortunates spent hours or days dying at the hands of a Garbageman sociopath. However, to give its new government legitimacy, the Lifers realized they had to treat captured POWs in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, or lose the political capital their advance had won them. Initially, prisoners were kept under house arrest, in segregated sections of refugee camps in what ever city they were captured in. Escapes and camp violence proved a more permanent, secure solution was needed.

By year three of the war, the Lifer government had established a large, well defended military brig/POW camp in a captured supermax outside Topeka, Kansas. The prison's guards nicknamed themselves "The Innkeepers", and proved a unique breed of Lifer. Though utterly committed to the rescue movement, these guards had the greatest contact with Choicer believers of any troops; spending 24 hours a day securing, re-educating and maintaining 'babykillers'. The Innkeepers were forced by international scrutiny, as well as the commands of their higher ups, to remain professional and humane. After the War, RESCUE International and other groups honored many former Innkeepers for their dedication to the humane treatment of POWs.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Diplomacy 3 ranks, Intimidate 3 ranks, Search 2 ranks, Brawl, Defensive Martial Arts

Affiliation Benefits: The Innkeepers are highly trained prison guards and interrogators, and surprisingly well versed in Choicer culture. Innkeepers receive a +1 bonus on Search and Intimidate checks, as well as a +2 bonus on Gather Information checks made among a population with a primarily Choicer or similar allegiance.

DARIUS "RESCUE SAW" COLSON



New Affiliation: Ninth Life
Official Designation: 9th Pro-life Infantry Battalion
Formation Year: 2061
Motto: “Try Once More”

“They’ve got us surrounded again, the poor bastards.”

- Creighton W. Abrams

Service with Ninth Life was thought of as a punishment detail, a suicide assignment that even the suicide bombers of the Lifer Army regarded as an unacceptable risk. It’s not that Ninth Life wasn’t competent or well trained, the men and women of the crew just seemed to have the worst luck of the War. Ninth Life was involved in every major battle of the Abortion War, and their heroic stands are well remembered among Lifer veterans. War heroes and White Rose honorees emerged from Ninth Life with regularity.

Brian Cowpens at the Charlie Street Rescue in Houston, Susan Delgado at Ft. Meyers during the Fourth Summer of Rescue, Aldon “Rescue Hammer” Marcell at the Battle of Philadelphia. The names and places are instantly familiar to any student of military history. They all fought hard, against overwhelming odds and fell as martyrs to the cause.

Just like nearly two thirds of all the members of Ninth Life.

Affiliation Prerequistes: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Improved Damage Threshold

Affiliation Benefits: As often as once per game session, you can call upon the quirky luck o’ the Ninth. You force the gamemaster to roll damage on an incoming attack twice, and take the lower damage total between the two. You may use this ability after the roll to hit is resolved, but before damage is rolled.

Once you use this ability, your luck tends to change for the worse, a legacy of your time with the Ninth. At sometime within the next few combat encounters, though not against the same adversary you used this ability against, the gamemaster rolls two dice for an incoming attack's damage, and assigns the higher damage total to your character. You may not use this unit ability again until you 'take the pain'.

Intangibles: Your Parents Named You WHAT?!

"Let me get this straight," said the twelve foot tall full conversion cyborg, who had personally killed sixteen abortion doctors and blown up a half dozen clinics, "you named your oldest son 'Abortion Kills' McCarthy? Jesus, man, don't you think that's a little bit much?!"

Many devout believers on both sides- especially Powereds- eventually take a War Name / Soldier Name of their own, symbolizing their commitment to their cause. Some parents take the concept one step further, giving their children a highly symbolic name as their birth-name. There was a brief fad among the Lifers of the late 2060s for fanciful, quirky, politicized names…. usually to the dismay of the unfortunately named children as they grew up. By the 2070s, Lifer parents had gone back to giving their children traditional American names, but not before a generation of oddly named children had entered the Lifer school system.

Many of today's Lifer kids are given a political statement as a middle name, but saddling a kid with a first name like "Rescue", "Abortion Hurts" or "Baby's Love" is considered unbelievably low-class today.

January 25, 2091.
Three days since War's End.
Boston, MA.

The leader of men sits alone, on the rubble strewn front steps of a burned and empty skyscraper at the heart of a devastated city. He wears the black and grey armored BDUs of a Lifer brigadier general, an insulated black trench coat looted from some ruined men's wear store pulled tight around him for warmth. His holsters are empty, and he's not wearing combat webbing for the first time in years. He misses the weight of his pistol, but unlike the rest of his unit, he didn't bother caching it before the surrender. He knew there'd either be other guns or he'd never need to fire one again.

Three days ago, Fairfax Dacoveney's world died.

The Abortion War ended here, in the Boston snow, sixteen blocks from where he's sitting. It ended in Brookline, so near where it all began. It ended when the Choicer's general, their Powered champion, their Roe, drove her sword through their last weapon's heart. Without Artemis, the Army of God finally succumbed to exhaustion, to the entropy he'd been trying to arrest for the last two years.

Fairfax knows that if he looked westerly, he would see faint the sodium-vapor flood lights the forensic teams have erected, brilliant yellow-white against a black and grey city. He doesn't look to the best, but does wonder where they've taken Artemis' corpse. And he's not sure if he wonders because he would like a chance to salvage what's left of her cyber-tech, or because he wants a chance to spit in her face before they close the coffin.

Dacoveney had been close enough to the final battle to hear the cyborg knight's dying scream. He saw her fall through his shell suit's enhanced optics, and knew what was coming next. A few of his men wanted to fight, to take down as many Choicers as they could before someone killed them. Dacoveney stopped them, knowing it was pointless. Or at least, even more pointless than usual. The Choicer forces were every bit as exhausted and demoralized, stretched just as thin as his own unit, but they still had their pet metahuman. Dacoveney knew exactly how any final suicide charge would end, and had no more stomach for futile killing and even more futile dying.

So he disarmed his men just enough to satisfy the Choicer and Fed-Gov soldiers who *were just beginning to realize they'd won. Told them to go home, cache what tech they could get their hands on, and wait for someone higher up in the AOG to contact them. To keep the faith, hide the guns, keep praying for the preborn, don't bow down now, even if you have to lay down the gun for a while. Terrorist busy-work, to keep their heads occupied so they wouldn't all get killed.*

And than Fairfax Dacoveney came home, to the glass and steel tower that is more a home to him than his mother's cold mansion ever was: One Eagle Plaza. The building everyone just called 'the White House' of the Lifer nation had seen better days. He was cleared by the combat types guarding the building, and the mid-range Powereds working the security cordon asked him the same desperate questions over and over. Fairfax told them the same thing he'd told the human troops, with the same shell-shocked weariness.

In the bulletproof and blast-proof elevator, climbing towards Ellen Dacoveney's office on the 115th floor, Fairfax realized his command was over. He peeled the general's stars off his collar and slipped them into a BDU pocket, unbuttoned the top flap of his jacket, and breathed again. Whatever he was now, he wasn't a soldier any longer. He was almost relieved that his part in it all was over.

His mother was the Managing Director for the Coalition for Life, which everybody who knew anything knew was just another way of saying AOG. It would be her signature on the surrender papers; that was the last duty owed to the Army she built. He'd help her, do what he could to support her, to hold the men and women of the Army together as the Choicers enjoyed their victory, but that goddamn last responsibility wasn't his. Fairfax was almost childishly glad at that; a thirty year old man who'd been a soldier in the Lifer Army of God since he was 16, who'd killed and almost died and commanded whole battalions, and he wanted his mother's comfort when things were darkest.

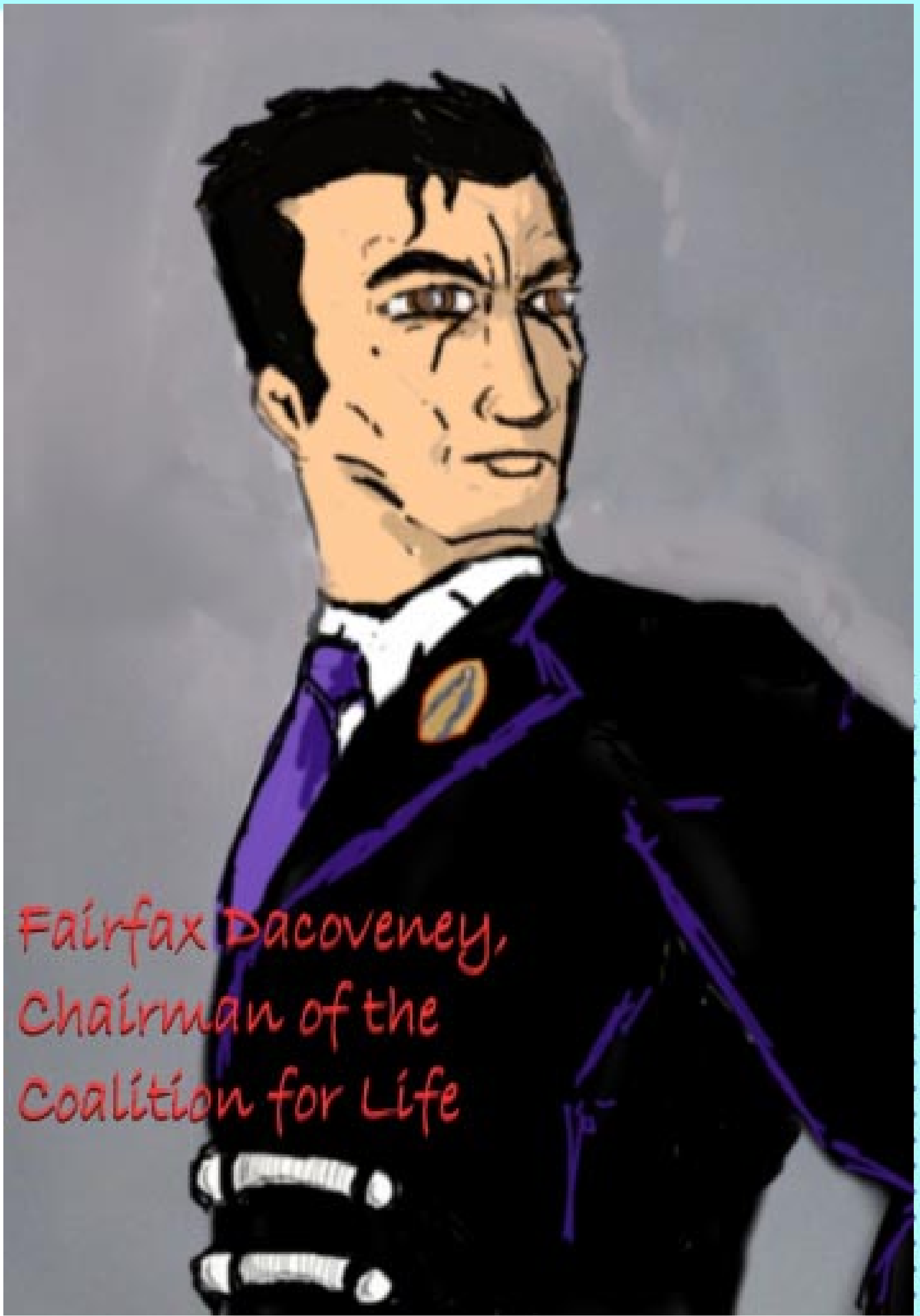
He knocked softly before entering his mother's office. He stepped inside, into the cool darkness that overlooked a burned and blasted city. And Fairfax Dacoveney froze where he was. He didn't step all the way into the office, just stood on the threshold. He stared at the cooling female corpse at the desk, missing the crown of her head, at the small pistol fallen to the plush crimson carpeting.

Fairfax punched the door jam so hard he broke four fingers in his right hand. He never felt the injury. Numb and shaking, he walked back towards the elevator. And it was his name on the surrender, a shaky and illiterate scrawl, since he was writing with a hand wrapped in fast-heal bandages.

That was three days ago. Three days of autopilot. Very few people around him noticed. Outwardly, Fairfax was sharp as ever, cold and efficient, working the new system as expertly as he ever commanded the Army. He worked with the AOGs lawyers to keep most of his troops out of prison, argued hard for the general amnesty, and used every contact, favor and in he had to make it happen. He kept his boys alive, and it was all auto-pilot.

Looking back, sitting here on the front steps of what used to be his nation's capital, Fairfax remembers very little of it. He knows it was done, and done right, but the last three days are nothing but a haze, grey as the snow all around. Grey as the scorch-marks marring the top sixteen floors of One Eagle Plaza, grey as what's left of this city. Grey as his mood. His work done for now, the Army he acquired like some bastard inheritance gone to ground or gone to ruin, Fairfax doesn't bother to pretend anymore. He just stares out across Eagle Plaza. Here and there, he meets the eyes of other veterans, all wearing the same expression on their faces. A very few he knows, most he doesn't.

Fairfax catches sight of a flash of orange- brilliant life amid the ruins. The bodyguard, the woman who spent more time raising him than his own mother is crossing the plaza. Not hurrying, just walking at her own pace. For the first time in his life, Fairfax realizes Jelly is wearing civilian clothes, not the armor-weave business suits the protective detail favors. It disturbs him in the same way his missing holsters disturb him. Fairfax keeps his eyes locked on her as she climbs the steps.



The orange skinned woman sits down beside the leader of men, and lays an inhuman hand on his shoulder, in a very human gesture. He lays his hand over hers.

She speaks in that soft, mangled voice, "Holding up okay?"

"Pretending to."

She leans back against the freezing steps, eyes tracking a Choicer combat air patrol soaring noisily across the grey sky. She waits for him to speak, in his own time, and is still enough of a sniper to wish she had a gun capable of taking this perfect shot. Finally, Fairfax does speak, "How many were you able to find?"

"MOI is dead, but we already suspected that. Most of the high command are in prison, and I expect they will face war crimes charges before summer ends. I was able to contact about half the White Roses, and they've gone underground, awaiting further instruction. The sixth and eighth Ghosts are just… gone. Even I can't find them. God only knows where they will turn up. And the Army itself…."

Dacoveney rubs his eyes, tiredly, and sits forward. "I know. I'll do what I can for them. The Choicers are being surprisingly accommodating…."

"they have to be. They know how things would end without their Treaty."

Dacoveney is surprised by the depth of hate in her waterlogged, mutant voice. "they *know we'd keep fighting them, or else we'd just all kill ourselves…"*

She stops hard. "Fairfax. I'm sorry."

He snorts, breath cold in the snow. He tosses a piece of rubble down the steps, and watches it fall. "Forget it. She left it on us. Forget it."

Neither of them says anything And Fairfax knows he has to pretend again. The orange woman watches him put his mask back into place, and lets him do it, needing to see that mask again. Fairfax stands, dusting the snow and wind blown grit off his pants as he does. She stands with him.

"Like I said, the Choicers are being surprisingly conciliatory, and we can use that. They never found Kodiak, don't have the first clue about Alternate One. Most of the Roses are still out there. We can use that…use it all."

He points back over his shoulder towards the capital house of the Lifer nation. "We go through the divesture they've lined up for us, then we can rebuild the CFL. She never…."

He chokes it down. "She…she never used the organization to its fullest potential. The Coalition was always just a front company for her, a way to move money to the direct rescuers."

"You have other plans?"

"Always do, Jelly. You know that. There's things I've wanted to do with the Coalition since I was twelve years old. I…. I couldn't until now. We can give the Army… we can give us hope again."

"Hope?"

"Or a close approximation anyway. First order of business…."

And as soon as he says that, Jelly shudders. He doesn't know why, but he pauses for a moment, and than continues, when he sees she isn't going to explain, "We need a meet with whatever unit commanders are still in the city. I don't want one of the DA boys shooting up some clinic and putting a wrench in these damn accords. I want everyone calm, I want all our soldiers to know if they fire a shot, they answer to me. Second…."

She falls into step just behind the leader of men, slipping back into the comfort of that old, familiar role.

They walk together, through the ruins of a slain nation, and plan resurrection.

Lifer Weapons

The Lifer movement has had to make do with military surplus, stolen weapons and improvised, easily smuggled explosives since the days of Salvi and Hill. In addition to using anything they can get their hands on, including captured Choicer arms, the Lifer Army of God have developed a collection of iconic weapons of their own. The Lifer military favors overwhelming firepower and simply, easy to field-repair devices, rather than the more graceful, precise weapons of the Choicer nation.

Striker Combat-Mag Gloves: These weapons resemble finely tailored, full fingered leather gloves, and are a part of the uniform of the day for "Killdevil" bodyguards. A shapememory polymer lining is sewn into the glove's striking surfaces, and as the wearer throws a punch, instantly hardens to deliver a devastating blow. Striker gloves provide the lethal punch of a pair of brass knuckles in an easily concealable, ultra-comfortable form.

Striker combat-mag gloves increase the base damage dealt by an unarmed strike by +1d2

Lifer Melee Weapons	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Incre-ment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Striker Combat-mag Gloves (PL 6)	+1d2 to unarmed strike	20	Bludg--eoning	-	Tiny	0.5 lb	14	Liscensed (+1)
Striker II Stunners	+1d2 to unarmed strike + stunning	20	Bludg--eoning	-	Tiny	0.5 lb	17	Liscensed (+1)

and turn the damage into lethal damage. Cost and weight given is for a pair of gloves.

Striker II Stunners: Striker stunners are an improved version of their standard combat-mag gloves, which incorporate a micronized version of the same incapacitating technology with powers police Stun Batons.

Any creature struck by the gloves takes damage as normal for a pair of Striker Combat – Mag Gloves, and in addition must succeed at a FORT save (DC 10 + damage inflicted) or be *stunned* for 1d4 rounds.

Benham 2061 Plasma Rifle: The Benham 942 was the primary weapon of Lifer assault troops during the War. It is a reliable, devastating plasma weapon based upon stolen US Army designs. This bulky weapon is distinguished by a simple, tubular barrel which contains the superheated plasma during the firing sequence and by the integrated nightscope and Video Scope mounted above the plasma mixing chamber.

Like most Lifer weapons, an integrated LCD display screen running the length of the barrel displays a continual loop of anti-abortion propaganda.

Griffin Arms .32 Machine Pistol: The Griffin Arms .32 is a reliable, rapid fire machine pistol, which served as the default sidearm for most Lifer soldiers during the War. This plastic and polymer pistol is designed for comfortable, one or two handed use by both lefties and righties.

It is also designed to be quickly broken down or reassembled. When broken down, the Griffen Arms .32 receives a +2 circumstance bonus on sleight of hand checks made to conceal the disassembled weapon. Breaking apart or reassembling the weapon is a full round action.

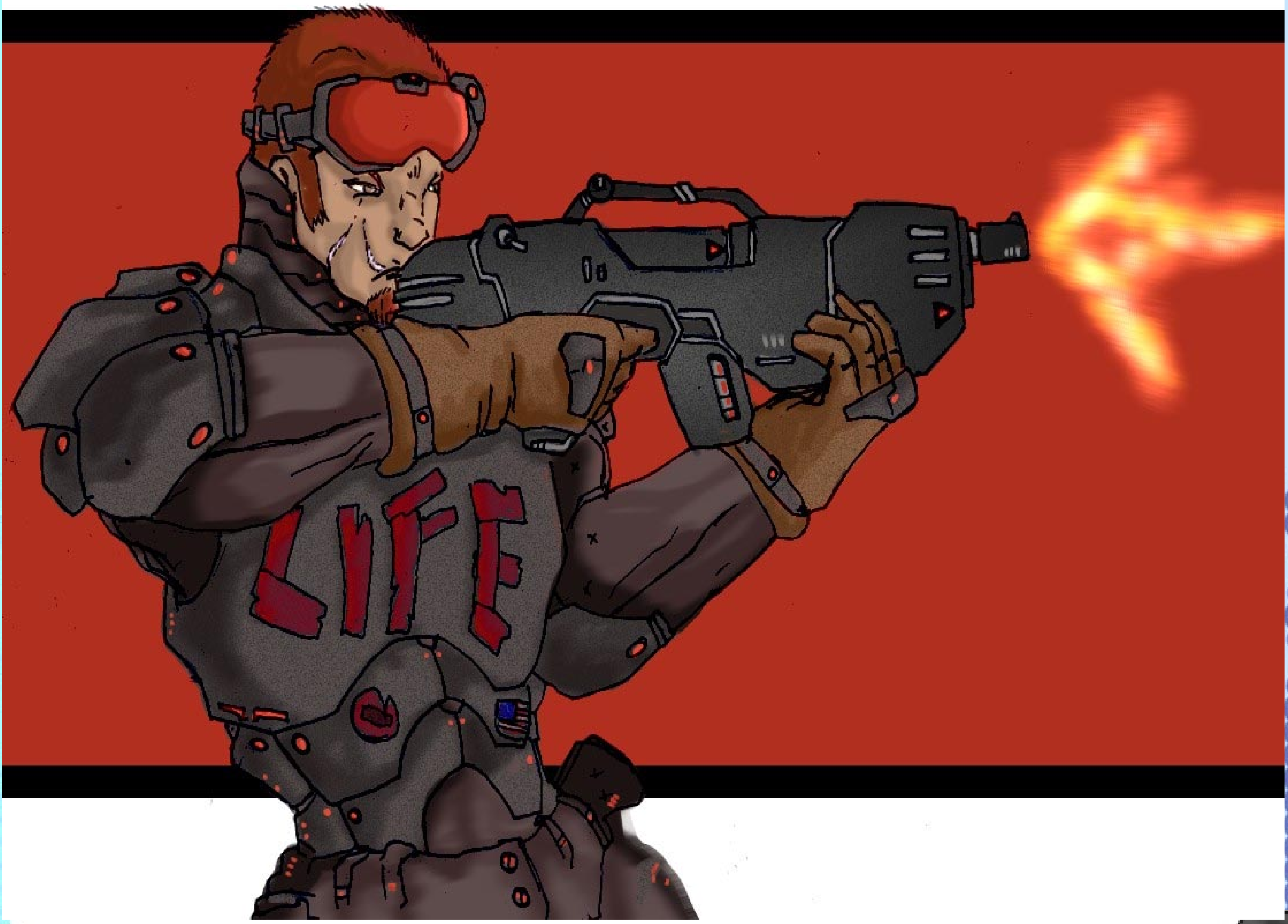
Griffin Arms High UV Laser Pistol: A Griffin Arms High UV laser pistol uses an almost invisible beam of lazed light to kill. The fact the muzzle flash and ultraviolet beam of the weapon is virtually non-detectable by normal human vision makes this light, pistol ideal for covert operations and assassination.

Griffin Arms Dual Barrel "Bi-Boy" Sniper Rifle: The GA dual barrel sniper rifle earned its nickname "bi-boy" for its ability to fire in two distinctly different modes, both of which are ideally suited for sniper duty.

The Bi-Boy's top mounted rifle barrel fires a standard 7.62mm round (usually a Field Ripper round) and sports a nightvision capable, range finding scope (the scope, range finding laser gadget) that can connect to a combat armor computers. The sniper rifle component of the Bi-Boy features a flash suppressor as well as an effective sound suppressor, ensuring maximum stealth.

Beneath the rifle barrel, the gun mounts a longer range, higher power version of the High UV laser used in the GA laser pistol.

Liquid Rescue: Foul smelling butrylic acid has been a weapon of the anti-choice movement for more than a century, and the stinking homebrewed acid has earned the name "Liquid Rescue" Injected into a building's stone walls with a heavy gauge hypodermic needle, the acid eats away at the brickwork, and releases a pungent stench. Dosing an abortion clinic's walls is a favored termite tactic to close down a clinic.



A dose of liquid rescue can be synthesized from common household solvents by making a successful DC 20 Craft (chemical) check, and dedicating at least 2 hours to the effort.

When injected into any stone structure, the acid reduces that section of stone's Hardness by 2d4 points, and as a chemical byproduct, release as a cloud of noxious fumes. Non-magical stone receives no saving throw, and magical stone saves as an unattended object.

Anyone within 60 ft of the injection site must make a DC 18 FORT save, or become *nauseated* for as long as they remain in the area, and for 1d4 minutes thereafter. The fumes dissipate naturally in a number of minutes equal to the points of Hardness destroyed.

Scheidler Widebore Fusion Cannon: This incredibly bulky weapon is one of the deadliest squad support weapons used by the Lifers. The sheer bulk of the Scheidler requires the weapon to be vehicle mounted or carried by Power Armor, though a few superstrong combat-types can wield this weapon.

The Scheidler has a short, barrel shaped central core, which incorporates a revolutionary magnetic containment system for the gun's nearly stellar temperature fusion charges. The weapon's barrel consists of three wedge shaped containment baffles surrounding a cavernous launch tube. The weapon splays itself open when fired, opening the containment baffles to unleash a burning line of radioactive plasma.

All creatures and objects within a 90 ft line suffer 6d10 points of fire damage, and may attempt a DC 15 REF save for half damage. Those struck by the fusion line are considered to be exposed to a severely irradiated area for a single round.

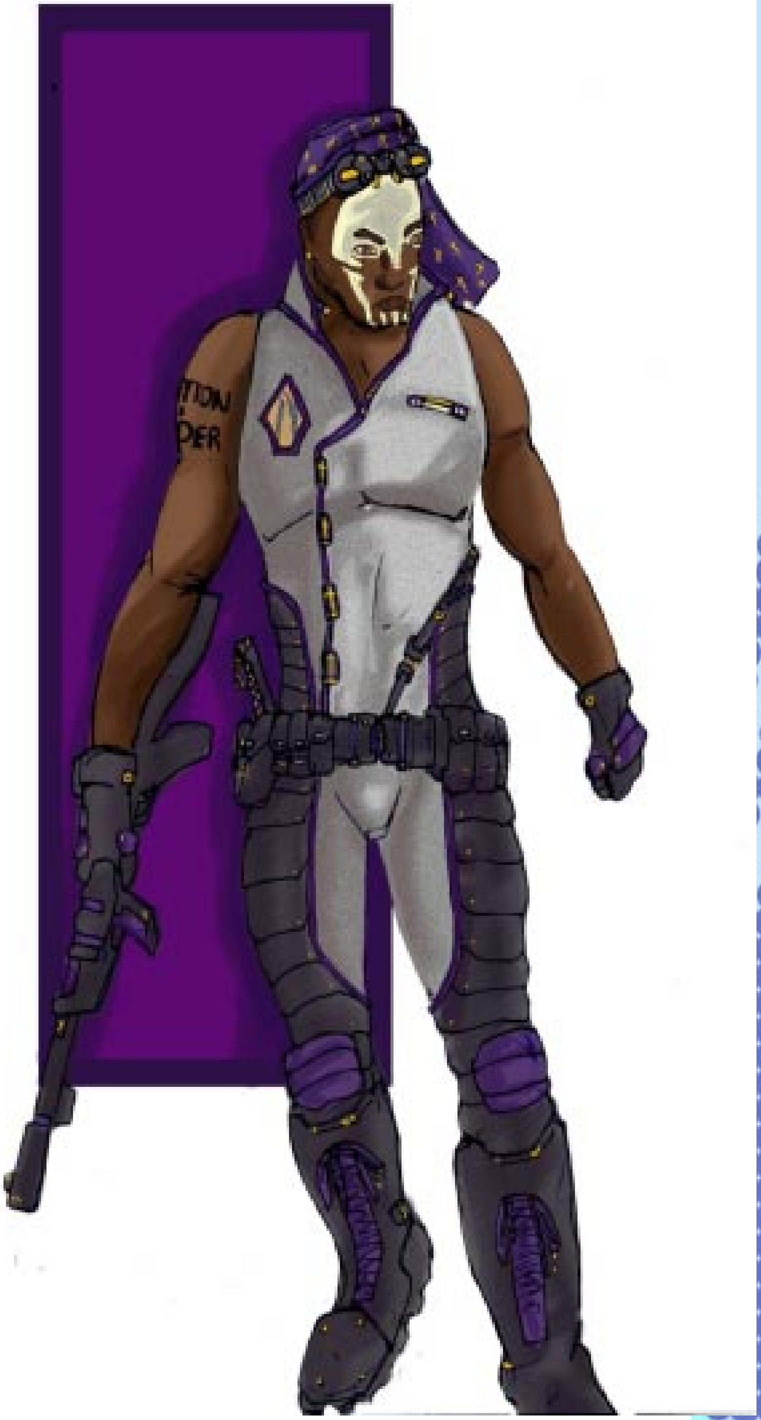
Shannon Mag-Launch Holdout Pistol: The Shannon Mag-Launch is designed as a nasty suprize, a single shot holdout pistol which uses magnetic acceleration to launch a pair of steel jacketed slugs at nearly Mach 2. The weapon is only slightly larger than a child's fist, and has a blunt, vaguely triangular shape. The weapon's twin, teardrop shaped barrels fire simultaneously, delivering a devastating impact despite the weapon's miniscule size.

The Shannon Mag-Launch is a 'use once and destroy' weapon; its firing mechanism is destroyed when it fires. The small weapon receives a +2 circumstance bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal it.

Slowpulse Grenade: Though it deals no damage in and of itself, slowpulse grenades are one of the scariest weapons in the Lifer arsenal, and a vital part of Lifer military strategy. Slowpulse grenades are often thrown or launched into a kill zone, immediately and conclusively removing a target's ability to resist or counterattack.

When the Slowpulse grenade is thrown, it detonates, creating an area filled with exotic energy fields and quantum anomalies 60 ft in diameter. Those caught within the blast radius must succeed at a DC 24 WILL Save or be *slowed* as the spell.

Affected creatures move and attack at a drastically slowed rate. Slowed creatures can take only a single move action or attack action each turn, but not both (nor may they take full-round actions). Additionally, they suffer –2 penalties to Defense, melee attack rolls, melee damage rolls, and Reflex saves. Slowed creatures jump half as far as normal. Slow counters and dispels haste but does not otherwise affect magically speeded or slowed creatures.



Lifer Weapon Enhancements

The following forms of specialty ammunition were invented by Lifer armorers, and saw wide use during the War. Many of these innovative weapons are also used by Choicer snipers, especially the ultra-useful Cybershock and Lifehunter rounds.

Cybershock

Cybershock rounds are large caliber bullets with a high tech central core. Micro-robotics and high capacity electrical discharge batteries deliver thousands of volts of energy despite being smaller than a grain of sand. When the bullet hits home, it delivers a massive electrical charge, designed to overload and fatally surge cybernetics. This brutal class of ammunition has been in wide use since the 2050s, and snipers firing Cybershocks have killed hundreds of 'borgs over the decades.

In addition to the ballistic damage of the round, a cybershock round inflicts an additional 2d6 points of electrical damage. Any creature with cybernetics who is stuck by the round must succeed at a FORT Save (DC 10 + the electrical damage inflicted) or suffer 1d6 points of CON and INT damage from cybernetic overload.

Cyborgs with more than two implants suffer a –1 penalty on their FORT save for every implant beyond two they are implanted with. Full Conversion Cyborgs suffer a –4 racial penalty on their saves.

Restriction: Ranged ballistic weapons only

Purchase DC: +9

Restriction Rating: +2 (minimum restriction rating +3, military)

Fieldripper

Fieldripper rounds are among the deadliest tools in a Lifer sniper's arsenal, and these fearsome, high tech bullets are responsible for hundreds of confirmed Choicer kills. Fieldripper rounds incorporate micronized circuitry and a high density storage battery, which allows the field to generate a disruptive static 'pressure wave' ahead of the bullet as it cleaves through the air.

This energy envelope allows the bullet to completely ignore the protective qualities of Mac-Tik derived forcefield technology, including vehicle fields, power armor force fields and even clinic force domes. Though expensive, the utility of these deadly and highly illegal rounds cannot be underestimated.

Restrictions: Ranged ballistic weapons only

Purchase DC Modifier: +8

Restriction Modifier +1 (minimum restriction rating +2 Restricted)

Lifehunting

Lifehunting ammunition is designed to deliver a potent neuotoxin based upon the study of Lifechain biology. This unique poison is designed to give human soldiers and police officers a way to take down Powered demi-gods without massive damage to the surrounding environment.

In addition to the normal damage of the round, these enhanced shells inject a potent toxin. Initial damage is 1d4 CON, secondary damage is unconsciousness for 1d3 hours. A DC 18 FORT Save negates this effect. Lifechained creatures suffer a penalty on this save equal to the number of Lifechain feats they possess.

Restriction: Ranged ballistic weapons only

Purchase DC: +10

Restriction Rating: +2 (minimum restriction rating +3, military)

Lime

The 'Lime' codeword refers to a secret Lifer project to use shapememory polymers and micro-circuitry to conceal hand weapons within otherwise innocuous objects, allowing Lifer infiltrators to bring weapons into secure areas without detection.

Any Medium or smaller melee weapon may be enhanced with the Lime gadget, which allows the weapon to be concealed in a dormant, non-weapon form which is can be either size Tiny or Medium. The gadget functions normally as whatever object it is concealed as while inactive. For practicality, small tools and electronics such as cellular phones, wrist communicators, palmtop computers and skill kits are often chosen as the Lime weapon's stored form.

While stored the Lime weapon is indistinguishable from a normal piece of gear, a DC 25 Knowledge (technology) or DC 28 Spot/Search check will reveal the weapon for what it really is. The Lime technology can be transformed into its melee weapon form as a full round action, and may be returned to its 'concealed' state as another full round action.

Restriction: Medium or smaller melee weapons only

Purchase DC Modifier: +3, in addition to the purchase price of the weapon's technological mode

Restriction Modifier: +1 (minimum restriction rating +2 Restricted)

Nano-toxic Coating/Load

Lifer combat knives, dueling sabers and high caliber sniper rounds are often molecularly impregnated with a dehabilitating nanotech-based toxin, which is specifically designed to inflict an agonizing, prolonged death on anyone enhanced with Choicer cybernetics.

In addition to inflicting damage, the victim of one of these enhanced weapons must succeed at a DC 14 FORT save or succumb to a debilitating nano-active poison. Initial damage is 1d4 CON and 1d2 INT; secondary damage is 2d6 INT. A victim must make a second FORT save to prevent permanent ability score loss from the secondary damage.

If the victim has nanotech based cybernetics, such as a Midwife or Covenguard's unique prosthetic arms, onboard nanocolonies or other implants, he or she suffers a –3 penalty on the FORT save, as the predatory nano-toxin converts the host's own nanotechnology into additional doses of the toxin.

Restrictions: Ballistic weapons and piercing/slashing melee weapons only

Purchase DC Modifier: +9

Restriction Modifier +3 (minimum restriction rating +3 Military)

Psychodisruptive

An energy weapon modified with this gadget fires ectoplasmic pulses designed specifically to disrupt the neural functions of psionic targets.

In addition to suffering normal damage, any creature with the Psionic subtype who is stuck by a blast from the weapon must succeed at a FORT save or be unable to use any psychic Supernatural or Spelllike ability for 1d4 rounds.

Restriction: Ranged energy weapons only

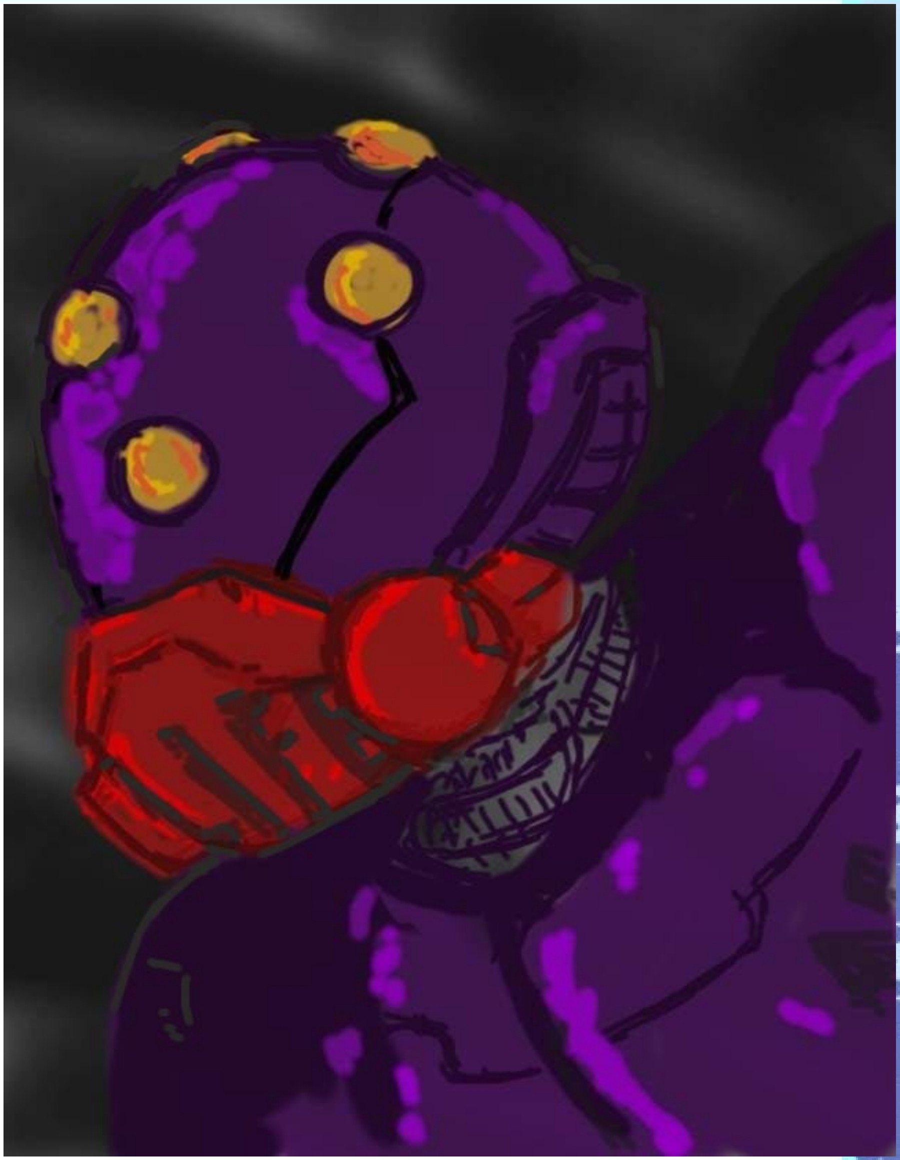
Purchase DC: FORT DC 12 +4
FORT DC 14 +6
FORT DC 16 +8

LIFE
FUCK YOUR CHOICE!

Table: Lifer Ranged Weapons

Lifer Ranged Weapons	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction Rating
Benham 2061 Plasma Rifle	2d12 fire	20/x2	80 ft	Single	40 cell	Large	14 lbs	23	(+3) Military
Griffin Arms .32 Machine Pistol	2d4 ballistic	20/x2	40 ft	Full Auto	32 box	Medium	3.5 lbs	16	(+2) Restricted
Griffin Arms High-UV Laser Pistol	2d8 fire	20/x3	30 ft	Single	50 cell	Medium	2.25 lbs	18	(+3) Military
Griffin Arms Dual Barrel "Bi-Boy" Sniper Rifle	Rifle: 2d10 ballistic Laser: 2d8 fire	20/x3	Rifle: 120 ft Laser: 150 ft	Single	Rifle: 10 box Laser: 50 cell	Large	16 lbs	30	(+3) Military
Liquid Rescue Vial	Special	-	10 ft thrown	-	-	Fine	Negligible	3	-
Scheidler Widebore Fusion Cannon	6d10 fire, REF DC 15 Half, plus radiation	-	90 ft line	Single Shot	6 cell	Huge	35 lbs	27	(+3) Military
Shannon Mag-Launch Holdout Pistol	4d8 bludgeoning	20/x2	20 ft	Single Shot	Single Use	Tiny	0.5 lb	11	(+1) Liscensed
Slowpulse Grenade	None	-	10 ft thrown	-	-	Tiny	1 lb	20	(+2) Restricted

“Tigerfly” Fast Recon Hardsuit (PL 7)



The Tigerfly is probably the highest tech suit of Power Armor fielded by the War-era Lifer military, a mobile sensor and communication platform blessed with great speed and surprising nimbleness. The suit is atypical of Lifer design philosophy, displaying a grace and stripped down aesthetic more common among Choicer fliers than among Lifer shell pilots, leading many military historians to conclude the Tigerfly is a stolen design.

However, the Tigerfly is a purely Lifer design, an innovative Electronic Warfare platform which allowed the Lifers to control the skies above embattled cities. Piloting a Tigerfly remains an honor reserved only for veteran pilots and young officers with AWACs training (represented by the AWACs Operator feat tree in Psi-Watch). The heroic reputation of Tigerfly pilots in Lifer culture is only strengthened by the fact that during the war, Lifer commander-in-chief Fairfax Dacoveney piloted one of these agile little shells.

Physical Description: The Tigerfly is a light and agile suit of combat armor, only slightly bulkier than an unarmed human. It remains one of the planet’s lightest and least bulky combat exoskeletons, and resembles a non-powered suit of combat armor more than a conventional Shell suit. The armor’s sleek hull is reinforced with a tight Kevlar II vest and padding which provides an additional layer of protection for the pilot’s groin, chest, joints and throat.

Like most Lifer equipment, the Tigerfly has a dark purple and black superstructure, giving it an advantage during night ops. The Tigerfly does include the omnipresent propaganda screens, but due to the role of the suit, they are relatively small, limited to palm-sized LCD ‘badges’ on the armor’s shoulders and pectorals, and are often left inactive.

The armor flies by means of mac-tik generators and magnetic levitation arrays built into short triangular ‘horns’ jutting from the armor’s spine. When not in use, these small protrusions retract into the armor’s backpack. The armor’s helmet is distinctly nonhuman, resembling a featureless sphere covered with camera lenses and sensor pods. The Tigerfly’s lower jaw and throat are a deep, blood red, decorated with the word LIFE, in a manner similar to the protest gags worn by young Lifers.

“Tigherfly” Fast Recon Hardsuit
Standard PL 7 Design Specs

Size: Large Hardsuit designed to be worn by a Medium pilot
Superstructure: Duralloy
External Armor: Kevlar II Spidersilk
Armor Penalty: -0
Strength Bonus: +4
Dexterity Bonus: +2
Speed: 30 ft, flight speed 90 ft (good)

Bonus Hit Points: 50
Hardness: 15
Defense Bonus: +0 (-1 size, +1 equipment)
Reach: 10 ft

Additional Modifiers: Enigma sensor suite reduces the effects of cover by 2 ‘steps’. Blindsight 180 ft radius, darkvision 150 ft, +2 equipment bonus to Initiative checks, +4 equipment bonus to Spot (*becomes +10 to Spot if Toss Cams are deployed*) and Listen checks, +4 Chassis bonus to Treat Injury, Repair and Knowledge: earth and life science checks, Knowledge: physical sciences checks, +8 Equipment bonus on Navigate checks, +4 equipment bonus on Drive and Pilot checks, +8 chassis bonus to Defense when targeted by guided missiles

Disadvantage/Design Flaw: Complex Launch. Requires 1 hour to pre-flight and fuel the suit, or 30 minutes with a DC 20 Pilot check.

Template: Sensor Scout Class, sacrifices Helmet, Left Arm, Torso and Boots Slot to accommodate expanded sensor systems. Left arm and Right arm slots may be swapped for left-handed pilots.

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Comfort Lining, Life Support, Display Panels, Flight Mode (shoulders), Expanded Flight Range (back), Flachette Rifle (right arm)

Onboard Sensor Systems: Enigma Sensor Suite, Blindsight Suite, Class IV Sensor System, Oracle Targeting System +5, Onboard Navigation, Electronic Countermeasures, IFF Transponder, Infrared Optics, Sensors: Combat Enhancement Load, Sensors: Medical/Scientific Grade, Toss Cams (no specific slots, due to Sensor Scout template)

Standard Weapons Loadout: Slam 1d8+STR modifier, Flachette Rifle (+5 to strike with oracle targeting link, 15 ft range increment, 4d6 ballistic damage, ignores ¼ Hardness or non-magical Damage Resistance)

Base Purchase DC: 37 (Restriction: Military +3)

Suit Variants: Tigerfly weapon variants are too numerous to mention. While the Flachette Rifle is ideal for close in dog-fighting, many Tigerfly pilots swap the weapon out for a weapon more to their liking. Pencil box missile launches and various rail guns are common choices.

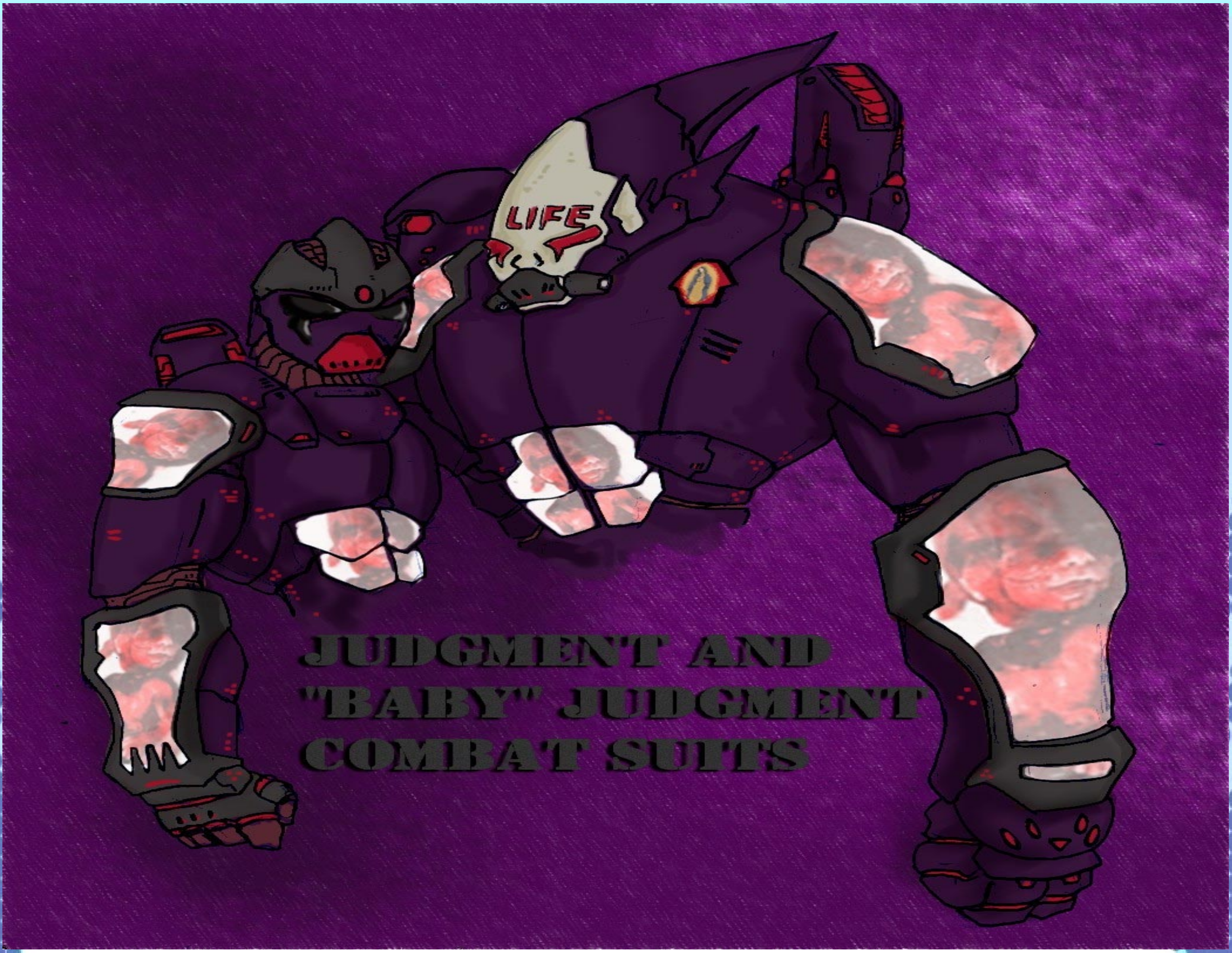
“Judgment” Rescue-Oriented Urban Combat Exo-Frame (PL 7)

Defeating even a single Judgment exo-frame is a job for an entire Choicer squad, or a full team of well trained metahumans, and even then is rarely possible without massive causalities. The Judgment epitomizes the Lifer military’s basic ethos: victory through overwhelming firepower, delivered by a committed Rescuer wearing a suit of power armor with more destructive capability than an entire 20th century tank platoon. This hulking shell suit can end a fight purely by virtue of its appearance on the battlefield- many enemies will surrender or retreat rather than facing one of these heavily armed behemoths head on.

Physical Description: The Judgment is a walking tank which stands nearly fifteen feet tall, and weighs more than four tons, blurring the line between man-portable power armor and robot vehicle.

The Judgment has almost simian proportions, with long, powerful arms and mammoth hands. The Judgment walks with a slightly hunched over posture, burdened by the weight of the pilot’s compartment and weapons load out on its back, contributing to its apelike appearance. The Judgment’s lower legs are thick and stocky, ending in spatualte elephant like feet, designed to keep the top heavy, multi-ton vehicle stable as it maneuvers.

The Judgment’s most fearsome weapons- its Firefog Dispenser and Liberty fusion cannon- are stored in a blunt, almost mushroom shaped weapon pod rising from its spinal armor. The right shoulder mounted weapons pod slides forward and locks into place when the pilot wishes to fire the Judgment’s main gun. A forest of small antenna, sensor nodes and sodium-vapor floodlights rise from the pilot’s left shoulder. The Judgment’s mini-missile launchers are



JUDGMENT AND "BABY" JUDGMENT COMBAT SUITS

concealed in a bracer like structure built into its left forearm. To fire, the Judgment pilot simply points and shoots.

Like all Lifer equipment, the Judgment is painted a dark, regal purple, with joints and vulnerable areas protected by thick grayish-black ballistic Kevlar and rubber. Most of the armor is dominated by integrated LCD display screens, which run a constant loop of gory fetal images and anti-abortion theology. The armor's bulky shoulders, barrel chest, abdominal, groin and knee plating, not to mention its forearms all incorporate high resolution display screens.

The armor's helmet is actually a sculpted sensor pod, as the cockpit protects the pilot's actual head. The faux helmet rises out of the armor's powerful torso, giving the suit a bullnecked, animalistic appearance. The armor's headpiece is designed for intimidation, resembling an horrid, mechanical skull carved from some type of durable grayish-white ceramic. In place of a lower jaw, the skull has something resembling a futuristic gasmask. The cranial dome skull is longer and taller than a human's, protected beneath a heavy, triple-pronged purple metal crown carved in imitation of Artemis' own.

The pilot enters the suit through a loading hatch in the center of the armor's back. The suit's cockpit is incredibly claustrophobic. The pilot controls the suit from a semi-reclining position, with his lower legs near the armor's groin, and his head at the suit's neckline. The pilot controls the suit through verbal and subvocal commands, nerve impulses read and transmitted by the Judgment's pilot-interface 'skullcap' and ergonomically designed manual controls, which were intentionally designed to mimic the familiar mouse/keyboard interface of first-person-shooters.

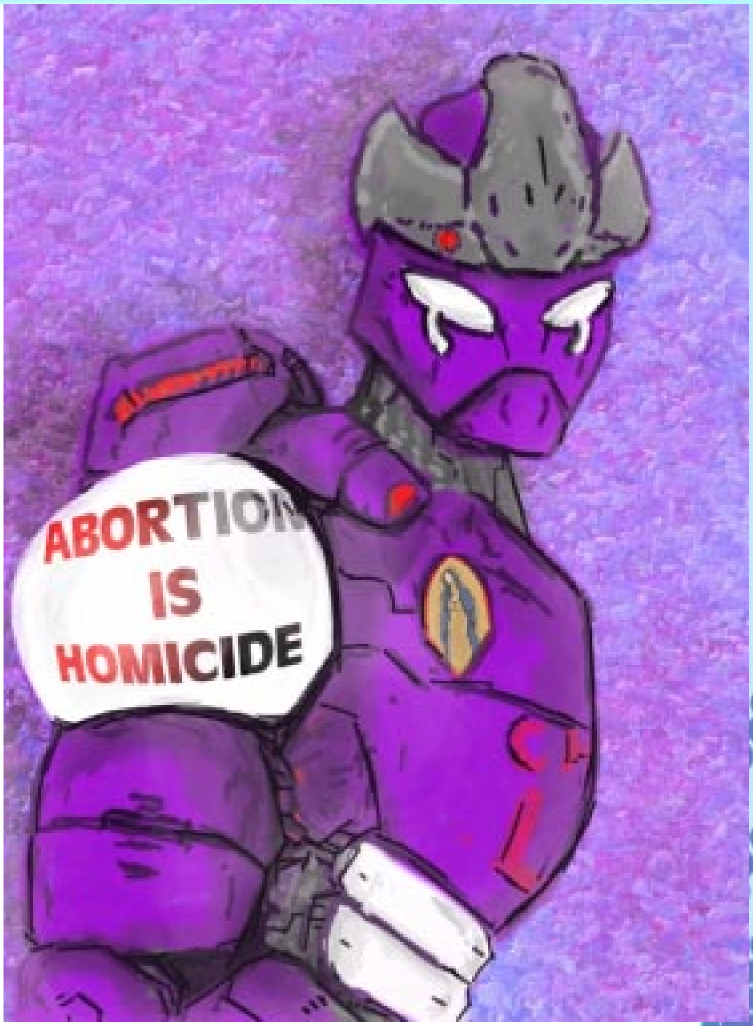
"Judgment" Rescue-Oriented Urban Combat Exo-Frame
Standard PL 7 Design Specs
Size: Huge Exo-Frame designed to be worn by a Medium Pilot
Superstructure: Neutronite
External Armor: None standard
Armor Penalty: -4
Strength Bonus: +15
Dexterity Bonus: +0
Speed: 20 ft , flightspeed 30 ft (clumsy, but has hover capability)
Bonus Hit Points: 220
Hardness: 30
Fire Resistance: 10
Defense Bonus: -2 size
Reach: 10 ft

Additional Modifiers: Charisma based skills have their DC increased by +4 when used on armored pilot. Immune to fear and mind influencing effects. Blindsight 180 ft. Armor recovers 1d10 HP per hour of non-use.

Suit Sentience: Intelligence and Wisdom scores of 12 each. Sentience has the following skill ranks: +5 Spot, +4 Listen, +2 Knowledge: theology & philosophy, +2 Knowledge: tactics.

Template: Heavy Combat Class; slower and bulkier but more heavily armored than a typical suit of armor.

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Comfort Lining, Life Support, Spaceskin, Pilot's Cockpit (Back and Belt slots), Pseudo-Muscle Endoskeleton (torso), Thoughtshield (helmet) Suit Sentience (left leg), Advanced Diagnostics (right leg) Hostile Environment Cladding (right arm) Reluctance Field (visor), AP-121 Liberty Fusion Cannon (back), Pencilbox Missile Launcher (left arm), Firefog Dispenser (shoulders), Smartpulse Hitter (helmet)



Standard Weapons Loadout:

Slam 2d6 +STR modifier

Reluctance Field (Target is nauseated within 50 ft of armor, FORT Save DC 22 target is sickened instead)

AP-121 Liberty Fusion Cannon (200 ft range, 30 ft blast radius 8d8 fire + Highly Irradiated for 1 round, REF DC 18 half)

Pencil Box Missile Launcher (4 missile tubes, variable load, 200 ft range)

Firefog Dispenser (30 ft radius, 6d6 fire damage, REF DC 18 Half, triggered by anything moving faster than 10 ft per round through affected area)

Smartpulse Hitter (200 ft max range, 2d6 bludgeoning + 1d6 per each 50 ft traveled, to maximum range)

Base Purchase DC: 47 (Restriction rating: Military +3)

Suit Variants: The "Baby Judgment" is a miniaturized, Shell Suit version of the Judgment Exo-Frame. The Baby Judgment is a relatively new weapon in the Lifer arsenal, developed post-War, and has not yet seen wide use in combat. The Baby Judgment is described below. The Baby Judgment is a slightly cheaper, smaller and more maneuverable suit of armor, which loses very little of the Judgment's formidable ability to deal death.

Physical Description: The Baby Judgment resembles a more streamlined, sleeker and nearly man-sized version of the hulking Judgment power armor. The Baby Judgment's proportions are more in line with the human norm, and its weight has been cut by an order of magnitude. Unlike it's 'big brother' the Baby Judgment does not require a pilot's compartment, the pilot simply slides into the armor like a suit of clothes.

The shoulder mounted weapon pod which housed the Judgment's firefog dispenser and fusion cannon has also been miniaturized. The Baby Judgment's fusion cannon is only slightly larger than a squad support railgun, while the older model suit had a fusion cannon nearly as large as a small motorcycle! The 'antenna farm' on the Judgment's left shoulder has been completely eliminated, replaced by internal components.

Instead of the impressive, H.R. Giger inspired pseudo-skull of the earlier model, the Baby Judgment sports a traditional combat helmet. The pilot's eyes are hidden by opaque black lenses sculpted into a 'teardrop' design, symbolizing the fact the pilot is 'crying for the murdered unborn'. The elongated purple steel crown of the Judgment has been reduced to a heavy gun-metal grey tiara bolted to the armor's helm.

The armor's coloration, and the presence of the propaganda screens, are unchanged in this next generation suit.

"Baby Judgment" Rescue-Oriented Urban Combat Shell
Standard PL 7 Design Specs
Size: Huge Shell Suit designed to be worn by a Medium Pilot
Superstructure: Neutronite
External Armor: None standard
Armor Penalty: -0
Strength Bonus: +9
Dexterity Bonus: +0
Speed: 20 ft , flightspeed 30 ft (poor, but has hover capability)
Bonus Hit Points: 100
Hardness: 25
Fire Resistance: 10
Defense Bonus: -2 size
Reach: 10 ft

Additional Modifiers: Charisma based skills have their DC increased by +4 when used on armored pilot. Immune to fear and mind influencing effects. Blindsight 180 ft. Armor recovers 1d10 HP per hour of non-use.

Suit Sentience: Intelligence and Wisdom scores of 12 each. Sentience has the following skill ranks: +5 Spot, +4 Listen, +2 Knowledge: theology & philosophy, +2 Knowledge: tactics.

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Comfort Lining, Life Support, Pseudo-Muscle Endoskeleton (torso), Thoughtshield (helmet) Suit Sentience (helmet), Advanced Diagnostics (back) Hostile Environment Cladding (right arm) Reluctance Field (visor), AP-121 Liberty Fusion Cannon (back), Pencilbox Missile Launcher (left arm), Firefog Dispenser (shoulders),

Standard Weapons Loadout:

Slam 2d6 +STR modifier

Reluctance Field (Target is nauseated within 50 ft of armor, FORT Save DC 22 target is sickened instead)

AP-121 Liberty Fusion Cannon (200 ft range, 30 ft blast radius 8d8 fire + Highly Irradiated for 1 round, REF DC 18 half)

Pencil Box Missile Launcher (4 missile tubes, variable load, 200 ft range)

Firefog Dispenser (30 ft radius, 6d6 fire damage, REF DC 18 Half, triggered by anything moving faster than 10 ft per round through affected area)

Base Purchase DC: 38 (Restriction rating: Military +3)

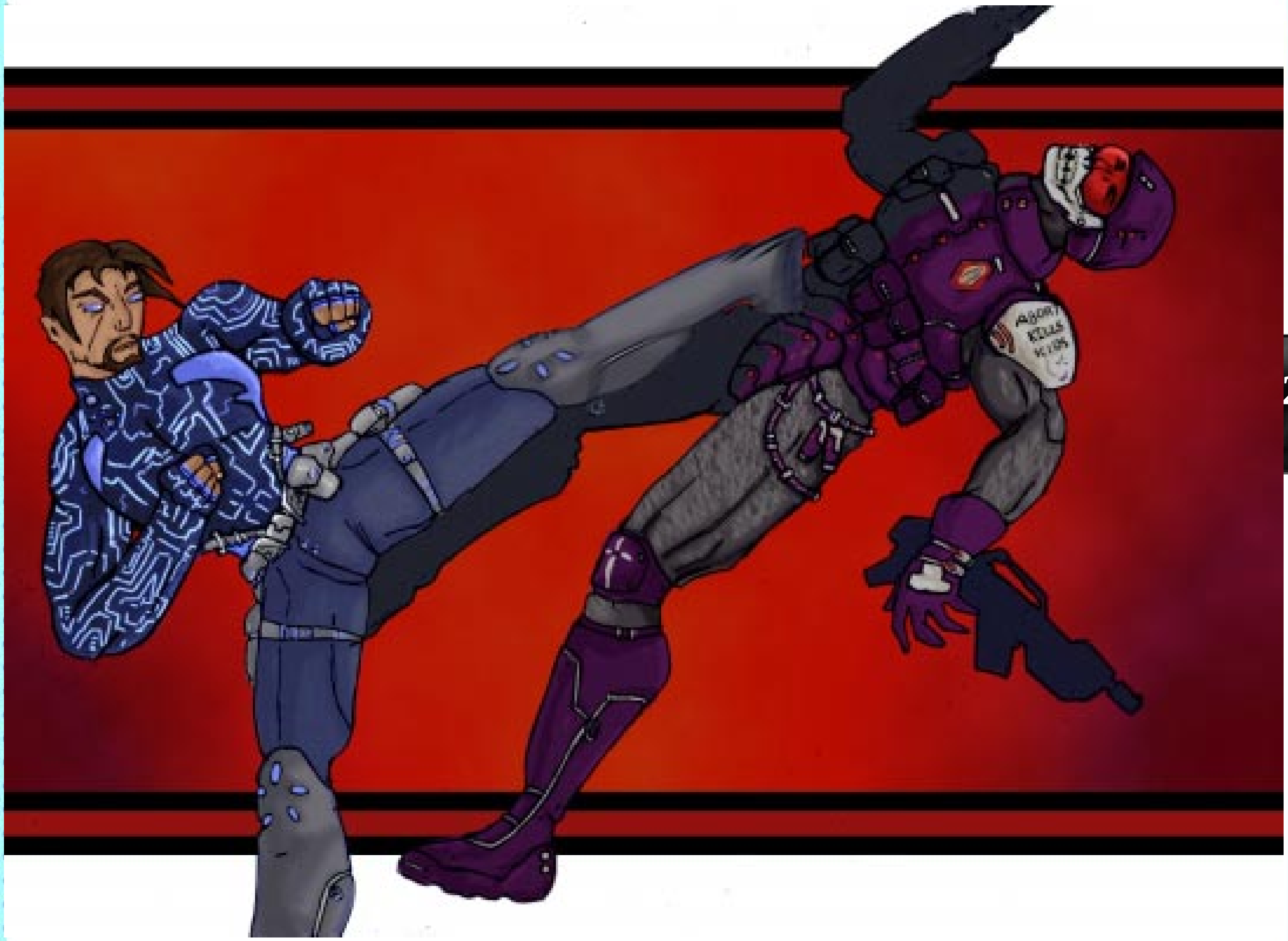
Suit Variants: The only known variant of the Baby Judgment is the “Angelmaker” Air Interdiction Shell. The two suits are virtually identical, and are differentiated only by their flight systems, the structure of their shoulder mounted weapons pod and the minor cosmetic differences in their helmets.

The Angelmaker is recognizable by the short winged flight pack built into the suit’s lumbar spine and the longer barrel of its weapon pod. The Angelmaker is designated as a ‘dog-fighter’ and is designed to go toe to toe with Choicer fighter jets and Atlantas.

The Angelmaker AIS removes the Baby Judgment’s Reluctance Field, Fanjets and Firefog Dispenser. The Angelmaker has Flight Mode, Expanded Flight Range and Advanced Avionics x2. The armor has a Flight Speed of 90 ft (good maneuverability).

The Angelmaker’s weapons pod is fitted with a AA-25 Downpour Chaingun (6d6 points ballistic damage, 200 round drum, 50 ft range increment, capable of full autofire) in addition to the Liberty Fusion Cannon.

An Angelmaker AIS has a purchase DC of 40.



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Epilouge: Nation.
October, 2104.
Boston, MA.

Fairfax Dacoveney knew he would never be President.

One of his children, perhaps, or one of the Coalition's one coming activists maybe. Fairfax knew he was still tainted by the ghosts of the Second American Civil War, and always would be. Fairfax knew what the Lifer media refused to believe, what their talking points never touched on: he would lose election. It would be a narrow defeat, but Dacoveney was realistic enough to realize it would be a defeat.

But even running was a victory, and by running, he shaped the debate. He laid the foundations for a Lifer presidency. For the future of his nation. Like everything he did since taking command of the Coalition, appearing here tonight, at the first of six Presidential debates, was another step out of the ruins of Boston. Out of the snow. Out of the death-zone. Out of that 116th floor office, which was just starting to stink.

Dacoveney knew he wouldn't win this year, or the year after, but the real victory was in the struggle. Above everything else, Fairfax Dacoveney was Lifer, and a part of him relished the hopeless fight most of all. It was a failing of his people, and their greatest strength.

Fairfax looked at the warning light above the green room door, as it changed from green to yellow. Two minute warning. The leader of men closed the smartlight windows cluttering his sightline, their contents committed to memory. He activated the orator-AI seeded to his brain, prepared himself to wage memetic warfare. The custom scripted thought-virals laced into the fabric of his finely tailored $12,000 suit woke up, and filled the air with pro-life pride.

He nodded to the orange woman, standing just behind him, like she always did. She tried her best to smile proudly, the expression not quite *working on her, but he understood. And than the light above the door flickered red, and Fairfax stepped through, into the crowd's applause…..*

Watch the city now.

Dawn breaks, as it always does in San Francisco, in shades of crimson and gold. Long, warm shadows stretch out along the city's winding streets. Choicer soldiers, dressed in armored exo-skeletons the same colors as the brilliant dawn, were busy erecting checkpoints at strategic points across the city. Morning traffic snarls to a grumpy stop, as hover-tanks, decorated with crimson and golden flourishes, take their positions, and traffic is forced onto overstressed alternate routes.

Street vendors erect pre-fab bucky-paper market stalls up and down Lombard, while city service crews put the final touches on parade floats made of genetically re-sequenced lilies, (their fragrance designed to calm emotions and hopefully prevent violence) and intricately sculpted force fields. Red and gold Roe-Day banners, hanging from almost every storefront façade and corporate tower and from most of the city's homes, whip and snap in the stiff bay breeze.

K-SAN 103.5's daily newscast reaches an estimated three million viewers, either by television, on the Mesh or sought out by viewers as they sleep, via the machine-telepaths that power the Dreamscape servers. As always, the news cast opens with a subconscious flash-map of the city, allowing a visitor's unconscious mind to highlight spots of interest and guide the way the media-AI presenters organize the newscast. Today, all the flash-map's 'quizable' hotspots are dedicated to the Roe Day celebrations: street fairs, outdoor concerts, free ballets, Covenant rituals and skyclad gatherings in celebration of Choice, and of victory.

The news desk was manned by junior reporters, as it always was for the major holidays, new faces fresh from college. The female anchor was dressed in a celebratory, blood red kimono with intricate white and gold filigree, instead of her usual tailored business suit. Even the male anchor wore red and gold ribbons twined around both his hands. Their allegiance was no secret, nor was their opinion on the holiday. They were citizens of Choicer America, by their own choice and their own beliefs, and they were reporting to Choicer San Francisco, on Roe-Day morning. Not even the Lifers watching could begrudge the reporters their colors.

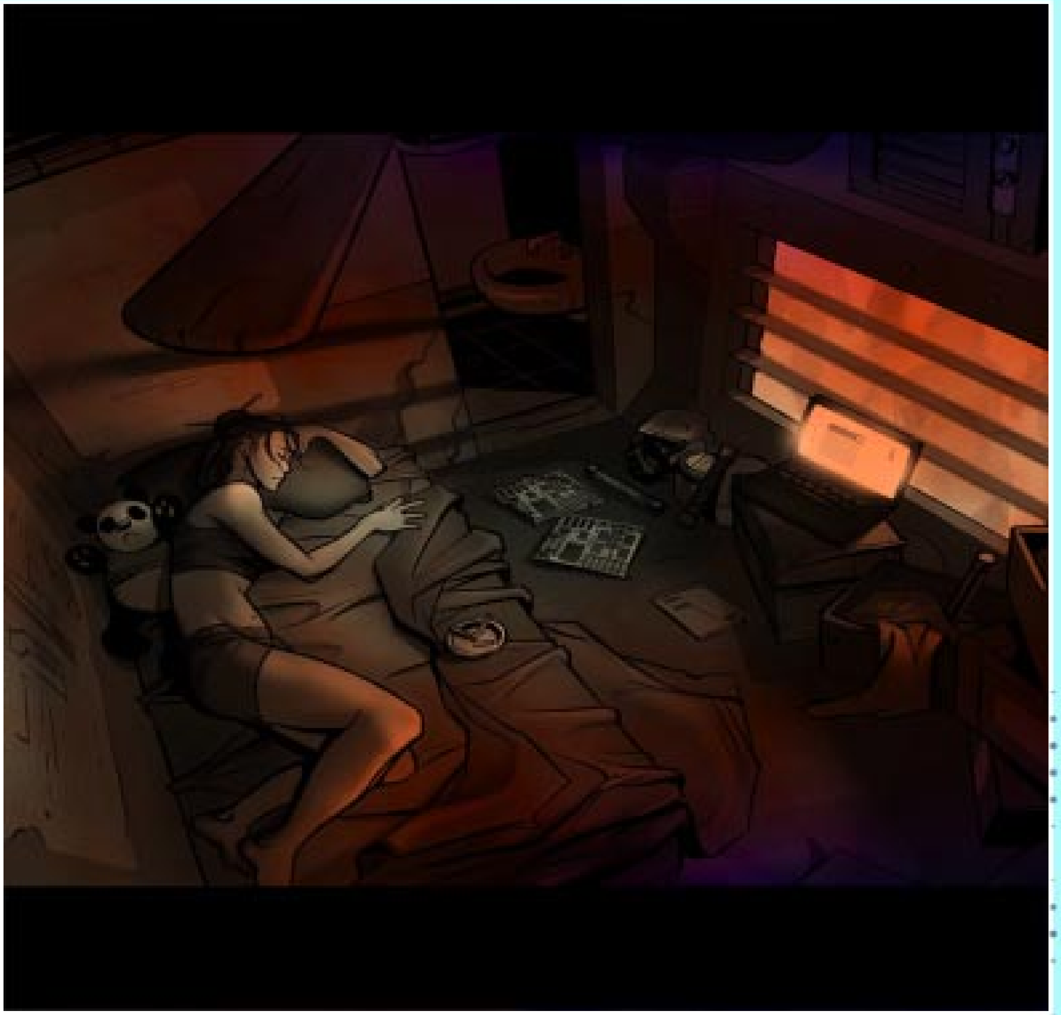
As always, the two reporters spoke in unison, "Good morning, and Blessed Be. It's January 22nd, 2107. I'm Brian Copiel…."
"…and I'm Danielle Elizando. San Francisco is on high alert as it prepares for the Roe anniversary festivities."

She smiles, warmly into the camera, and knows that graphic overlays describing the security precautions, expected threat levels, parade routes and rules of conducts for attendees are being superimposed over her carefully manicured image. "Preparations are underway for this, the 16th Roe Day celebration since the signing of the Treaty of Boston. Some of the Covenant's most powerful post-humans will be attending the festivities either in the city, or upon Aradia's Isle, and you can rest assured they'll keep the huge crowds expected safe."

Copiel begins to speak, now, as he always is scripted to when speaking about the American military. The female speaks about Covenant matters; the male speaks about non-Covenant America; it's an old stereotype, an even older memetic strategy. He speaks, knowing combat footage is being superimposed over his image. He moves his hands smoothly, gesturing just enough the viewers can see the gleaming red ribbons on his hand and know where his politics lie.

"APEX is working closely with their Covenant allies to ensure that safety. In a pre-dawn raid outside of Oakland, APEX Team Three arrested over a dozen members of an active 'termite' cell. APEX was able to make the arrest with minimal use of force. Two of the men arrested were post-begins

-humans, and one of these men, Sergio Hernandez, better known as All Uprise, is wanted in connection with the bombing of the Salon Avenue Covenhearth last summer."



She speaks, turning her head instinctively so that she is backlit by the broadcast's superimposed graphics. She knows that her face is lit by the mirage-light of footage of Hernandez' arrest. A Hispanic man with chrome skin, streaked with purple and black, is being lead in restraint-cuffs to a waiting APC. In the superimposed image, the silver skinned warrior glares at the camera drones with utter loathing.

"Hernandez will be returned to San Francisco to stand trail for the bombing later this week. "

Watch the city now.

One hundred and thirty four years since *Roe vs. Wade* legalized abortion, and began this conflict, Choicer San Francisco celebrates.

Jessian Abrams, who used to go by the code-ident Radiant VI, wakes like she does every day, by running a quick diagnostic on the neuro-cybernetics that replaced the small part of her brain she lost at the Oglada-Souix reservation. Her self scan finds no faults in her neural net, no reason at all for the early morning phantom ache that settles into her reconstructed left eye and temple while she slept. The old soldier dresses quickly, telling herself that January 22nd is just another day, and that the only thing different that today, one or two of her co-workers will take her out to lunch, honoring the high school teacher for what she was all those decades ago. And like always, Jessian will tell herself she doesn't miss it, and doesn't wish she still wore RAINBOW Liberty's unit patch.

On Beacon Street, a group of young priestess-midwives crowds into a shopping mezzanine photobooth to snap a picture of them all, on the first Roe Day since the implantation of their crimson cyber-arms.

All of them save for one begin their residency this year. The youngest among them performed a single abortion during her training, and had no taste for the way it made her feel. Unlike her sisters, her smooth cyber-arm is orange and gold, not blood red, and not lacking for courage, she begins service with the Choicer military as a field medic this summer. None of that matters though, because Priestess of the Claret Carrie Wrey celebrates choice, and to a much lesser degree the surgery she doesn't like performing, as joyously as any of her red armed friends.

All across the ancient wharf, the city's thousand small boats and charter craft replace their usual panoply of colorful buckypaper sails with red and gold spidersilk in honor the holiday. Bold, strident pro-choice slogans flap crisply in the breeze. Above, a quartet of metahuman soldiers flies in a loose diamond formation over the choppy waters of the bay. The post humans chase each other through the sky like dolphins, enjoying the freedom of the morning, but still alert for trouble over their combat net.

And a hundred and four miles above the city, descending on a smooth orbital track, the Covenant-flagged starship *Ameretsu* returns from a small Choicer out colony in the Eastern spiral arm. A steel carapaced woman named Raxwire flies escort alongside the starship, relishing the chance to soar free again after being cooped up in her cabin for seven long months worth of hyperspace. Her family fled the Earth during the worst days of the War, when it looked like the Choicers would be hunted down to extinction. Now, nearly two decades later, Raxwire returns to her birthworld, not quite believing that her people survived, and determined to ensure none of her people ever have to run to the stars again. Her rough and pitted carapace flashes furnace hot as she hits atmosphere, high, high above the city.

Watch the city now.

One hundred and thirty four years since *Roe vs. Wade* legalized abortion, and began this conflict, Lifer San Francisco seethes.

He's sixteen finally, old enough to know the truth. Kevin James Carson's three uncles will be taking him to his first White Rose Banquet tonight, and he'll finally have the answer to a question that's plagued him his entire life: how his daddy died. One of his scarred, cybered-up uncles, these giants that he's looked up to his whole life, will let Kevin take his first drink tonight, and one of them will finally tell him the whole story, the family legend he's built up in bits and pieces over the years. And sometime tonight, Kevin knows he'll meet his uncles' A.O.G. contact, and if he impresses the man, he'll be a soldier. Just like his father.

Golden armored soldiers checked his ID at the pedestrian barricades near the entrance to the financial district. The telepath pressed his right wrist, with his grey-market nano-infection identification load, to their scanner and waited for the pleasant beep. Dressed in a cheap Choicer-style t-shirt, with his hands wrapped in red ribbons, the telepath attracted no attention, no suspicion. He smiled and joked with the soldiers for a moment, before moving on. The lethal thought-viral he had invented gestated peacefully within his thoughts, waiting to be unleashed during tonight's parade.

A few blocks South of the huge and rambling Choicer markets near the heart of the city, in one of the largest Lifer ghettos, a crowd of more than 1,200 gather at the somber statue of a mother and child that marks the Grave of Those Unchosen. As she has every day for the last six years, a Neverborn post-human named Maria Salvadora speaks with gentle conviction about the horrors of abortion, but begs her listeners not to give into violence. And as she has everyday, she is accompanied by a rotating pair of SFPD agents, more to protect her from hardliners within her own faction than to shield her from Choicer retaliation.

On the outskirts of the impossibly expanded city spawl-zone, where shanty towns have sprung up amid graffiti covered War era ruins, SFPD police transports glide down narrow alleys. The ruin-zone comes alive with obscene shouts, and with the eye-scraping whine of unleashed stun weapons as the riot armored officers load genetically enhanced Lifer squatters into the back of waiting patrol cars. Lifer children run for hidden bunkers and stealth-towns deep within California's resurgent forests, while their parents throw punches to protect them from the agents of a country they no longer feel any connection to.

Watch the city now.

Otherverse America Adventure Seeds

The following section provides a list of 100 adventure ideas for the Otherverse America campaign setting. They are balanced between combat and exploration, between politics and romance, between offense and defense and showcase the diversity and danger of the setting. Most of these adventure ideas can be exploited by both Choicer and Lifer characters with little modification, while a few require (at least some of) the player characters to be members of a particular class or faction.

Gamemasters can use them as seeds for episodic adventures, string several storylines together to form a campaign, or just occasionally pull a plot hook as a newspaper headline to add another layer of realism to the world. These adventure seeds also give players and gamemasters alike a good sense of what daily life is like within the Otherverse.

1. A previously unknown, 13 year old Lifer metahuman is wounded and captured during a raid in New York State. She answers only to her AOG codename Lament, and no record of her existence can be found in any government database. Her codename hints at her absolute mastery of the Song of the Silenced Object Philosophy and destructive sonic talents.

2. Hardliners within the Lifer AOG want to assassinate Dr. Carlos Novarez, one of the sitting members of the Coalition for Life's board of directors, after it is revealed that the moderate Lifer politician has taken campaign contributions from several 'lino' organizations.

3. The Nexii Genetic Clinic begins offering the 'Monarch genome' for sale. This expensive genemod is based on the genetic pattern of a Rainbow LIBERTY soldier who was killed in 2072. Recipients gain the flight, energy projection and limited animal dominance talents of the fallen Powered.

4. While celebrating the implantation of her *obstryx nanonics* with friends, a 17 year old Neo-Witch Midwife vanishes from a club in the Choicer district of Miami.

5. The Covenant has opened the Northern Spiral Arm out-colony of Charity to immigration, and is offering financial incentives and land grants to Choicer metahumans and combat vets who want to help tame the world.

6. Five children, all younger than ten, have been brutally murdered within the confines of Birmingham's Enclave. All five victims were children from relatively poor Lifer families who had accepted scholarships to attend some classes at Choicer-ran schools outside the Enclave.

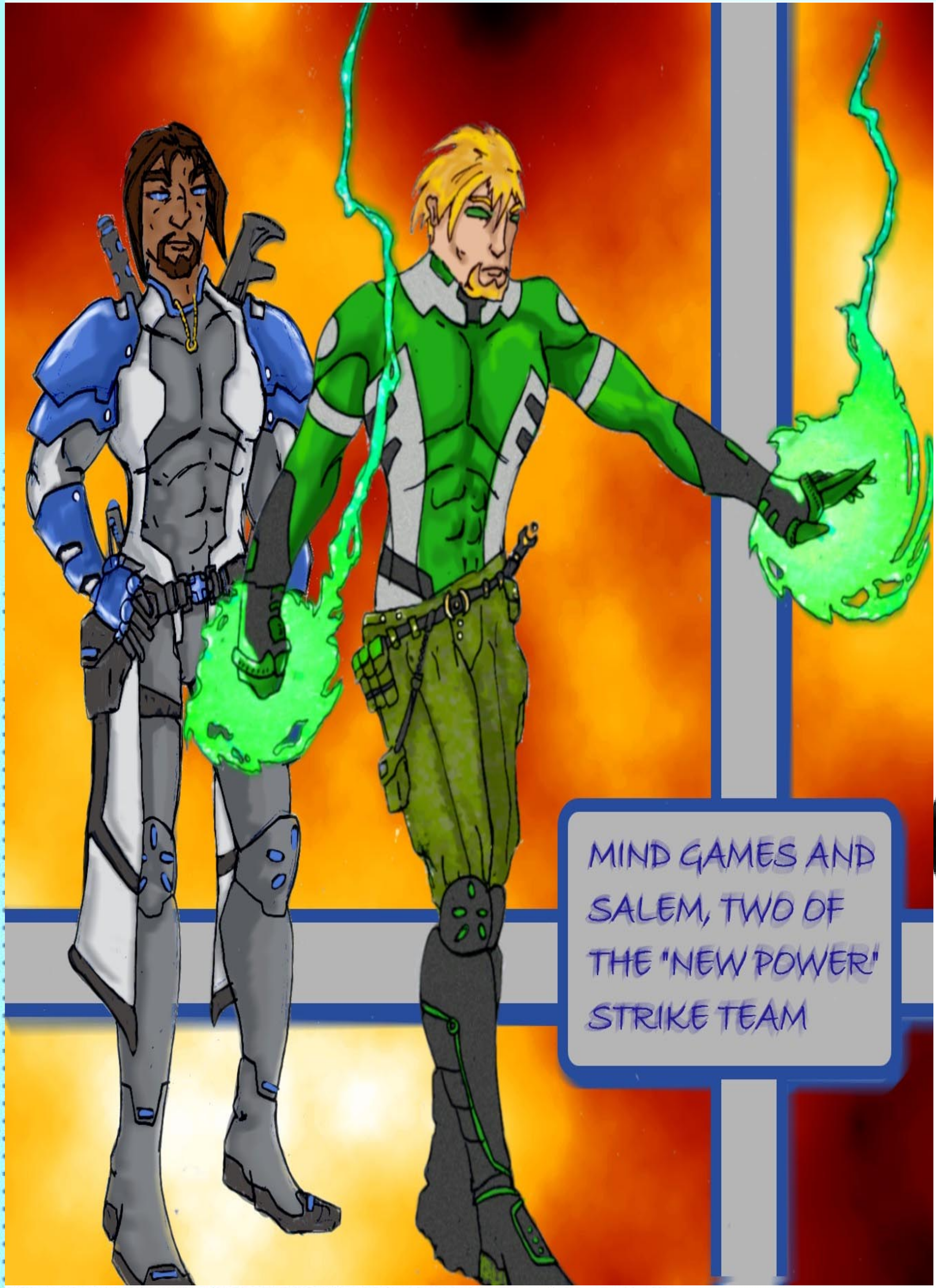
7. Ramsey "Will Power" Nichols, a Lifer post-human whose massive empathic manipulation talents have been locked down for decades by military nanotech is finally being released from federal prison. Bastian operatives plan to assassinate the former Lifer general as soon as he steps into open air for his crimes during the War.

8. A low level AOG cell in Montana is funding their 'rescues' with meth sales and bank jobs. Everyone wants to take these idiots down. The Choicers want them because they've wracked up a pretty terrifying count of slain abortion providers and pagan clergy, and the Lifers want a piece of them because their brutality and unrelated crimes (including crimes against the Lifer community itself) are giving the movement a bad name.

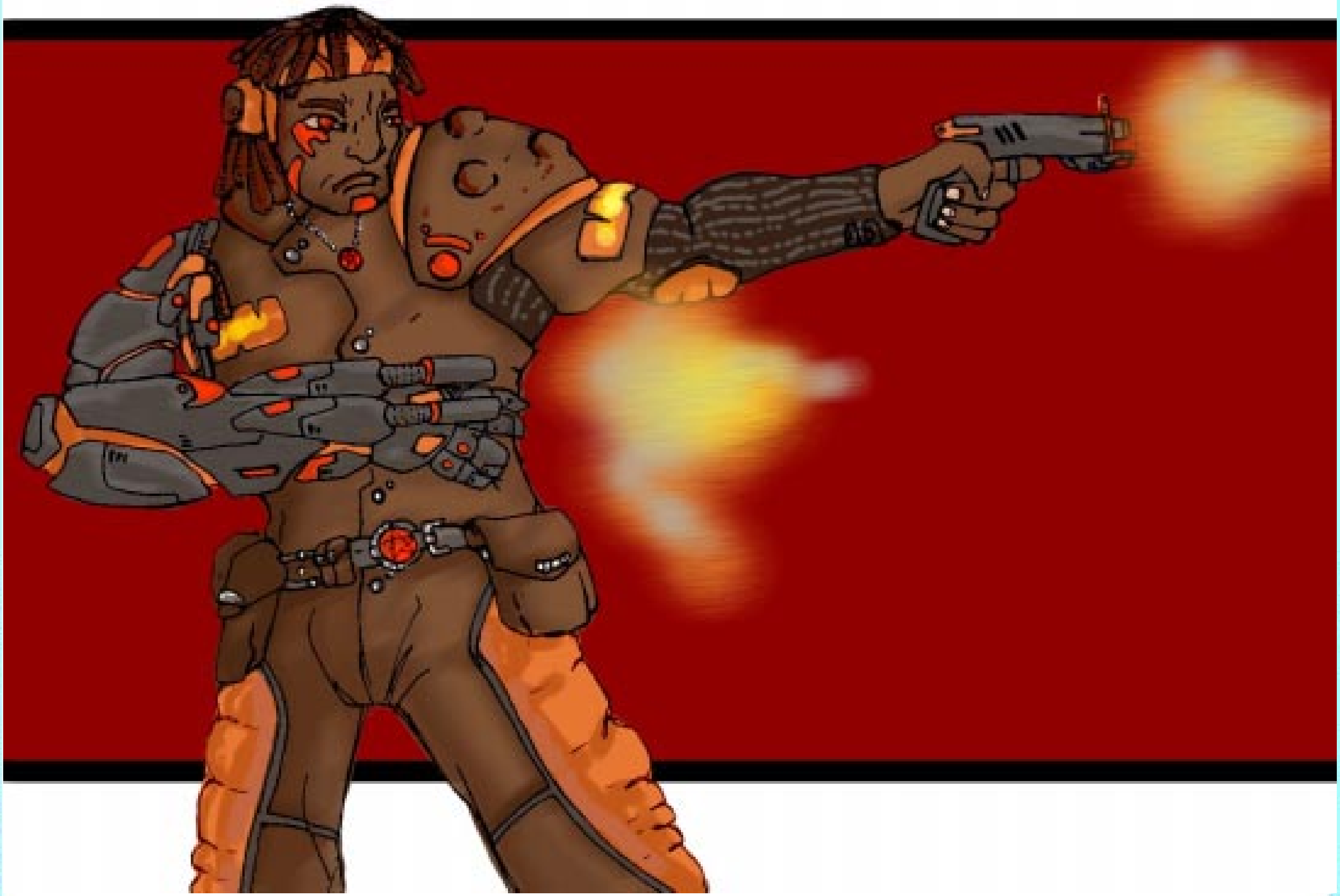
9. The Lifer idol singer Strangelet (Amber Whiterose Fernandez) is finally returning to Earth after a long sabbatical to the Lifer out-colony on Jupiter. Her return concert will be held in Boston, on the next Roe Day anniversary, and is already booked to capacity.

10. A cargo-shuttle carrying components for Choicer nanotechnology crashes into the Pacific Ocean, just a few miles west of the Pacific Beanstalk, while en route from the lunar colony.

11. Naomi Nude.Mesh, a celebrity porn site is offering to pay several thousand dollars for usable



MIND GAMES AND SALEM, TWO OF THE "NEW POWER" STRIKE TEAM



images or full sense recordings of Choicer celebrities, famous metahuman activists, Woven Circle members, and the like at a Beltane orgy.

12. San Francisco is hosting a major mixed martial arts tournament. For the first time in years, Lifer and Choicer martial artists are being allowed to compete in the same league. Different 'weight categories' allow unmodified humans, combat types, powered heroes, 'borgs and near-human aliens to compete against one another.

13. Nakamoto Ltd, a starship design firm on the cutting edge of ITF corridor research, has been contracted by the Coalition for Life to begin an ambitious and systematic study of the afterlife/pre-life, near death experiences and the nature of human consciousness, in hopes of finally finding concrete, scientific proof of their beliefs.

14. The ninth and tenth Ghosts of Babies Past attack a small Samhain celebration in Nebraska. Lacking metahuman defenders of their own, the Covenant celebrants are defenseless against the onslaught of the two fearsome Closers.

15. An early Neolithic burial mound recently uncovered near Stonehenge shows evidence of pre-Christian rituals nearly identical to current Covenant practices. Gardnerian politicians trumpet the find as concrete evidence of a hereditary witchcraft tradition.

16. The Lifers are attempting to recruit five star Army General Robert Tucker Goliad into their ranks. If he defects, he'll be the highest ranking US Army officer to go rouge since the War began. Gen. Goliad never liked the nation-status the US government gave the Covenant. Goliad's opinion hasn't improved since his oldest son left home to become a

Neo-Witch Seeker after his precog talents manifested.

17. A 7.6 magnitude earthquake rocks Southern California. Despite the island's integral safety systems and stabilizers, a major portion of Aradia's Isle is rendered uninhabitable. Several of the complex's lower levels flood, threatening the artificial island's stability further.

18. The nanotech-based cyborg Jennocyde (Jennifer Kojima) was killed by Life Tank during the first battle of the Abortion War. The South Dakota clinic she died defending is no longer active; today it is a war museum. During routine renovations, the inert body of a humanoid child, made of the same tech Jennocyde invented, was discovered. APEX meta-physicians were able to awaken the strange cyber-child, who seems to have at least some of the fallen Powered's memories.

19. One of the best military museums in the country is Charleston, SC's Christ Centered Military Heritage Museum, which boasts an impressive collection of Lifer weapons, shells, and fighting vehicles. Last night, someone stole about half the collection. It's obvious that whoever pulled the job knew what they were doing. The museum turned out to be one of the largest AOG weapon caches in North America, hiding in plain sight. Though all the displays were decommissioned, most of the war machines were disabled in such a way they could be restored to full function with just a few hours of effort.

20. 2107's newest and stupidest Mesh fad is "Term-a-slam", basically ramming into one of the Lifer movement's instantly recognizable 'Truth Trucks' at full speed in a stolen car and uploading the resulting footage. Some 'slammers' have stopped aiming at the durable truth trucks and have started slamming into any vehicles they can find with Lifer bumper stickers.

21. A Dianic Rite Neo-Witch Midwife one of the characters is acquainted with wants that character to attend the ceremony / surgery where she is implanted with her bionic badge of office.

22. During the Midsummer Festival, a huge caravan of Full Pro-Life nomads descends on Choicer San Francisco like a swarm of locusts. Though they might attend a protest-rescue or two, the clan's main goal is pretty apolitical. They just want to boost as much as they can from Choicer stores while everyone is distracted, and maybe make some spare cash pick pocketing the crowds at the holiday street fairs.

23. During construction of a new apartment complex, a construction crew in New Orleans unearths a badly damaged War-era Judgment. The shell suit's decaying onboard fusion stack detonates, destroying a huge portion of the Ninth Ward (again) and scattering radioactive shrapnel throughout the city.

24. A Choicer combat squad, comprised mostly of "Choice Four" veterans, scrambles into the air. A precognitive flash from one of the tac-oracles pinpoints an imminent attack on a Covenant women's temple in Buffalo by several unknown Lifer metahumans.

25. Three years ago, Choice Squad Four was able to insert a psi-capable deep cover operative into the lower echelons of the Coalition for Life. Now, the telepath's cover is blown, and he's got a death warrant out on him. The Covenant must find a way to get their psi out of Boston, preferably without an open engagement against any of the hundreds of Lifer post-humans patrolling the city.

26. Lord Charles Starspiral, a third degree high priest of the Gardnerian tradition and one of Lady Emily Nicellos' fiercest rivals, is trying to force the Woven Circle into a vote of impeachment. A major proponent of the Pacific Beanstalk, he and his political allies stand to make a fortune when it goes operational. His pretext for the impeachment is financial irregularities concerning the Lesbos Island Beanstalk, which is owned by the Nicellos family.

SOFIA TARRAS,
WARNAME:
RESCUE FANTASY,
LIFER ULTRA-MIND

27. “Rescue Hammer” Aldon Marcell, a former Lifer grunt, retired to his home town of San Francisco after the Truce was signed. He opened a dojo, where he teaches Lifer grannies and kids the basics of Rescue Judo, and as far as anyone can tell, hasn’t picked up the gun in sixteen years. Naturally his neighbors and family are shocked when he’s accused of the murder of a Woven Circle undersecretary, and have good reasons to think the ex-soldier may have been framed.

28. Famous Choicer Powered Sara Concord and Battle Cry (Hercules Cray), an APEX operative, are wed in an elaborate, media saturated handfasting taking place at Washington D.C. Security for the wedding brings the Capitol to an almost complete standstill for the better part of a day.

29. While attending a clinic demonstration (either as a clinic defender or as a rescuer), one of the characters has the chance for romance with a charismatic, non-superhuman activist from their own side. Things are slightly complicated by a poorly coded thought virus that’s zipping through the crowds, playing with emotions, lowering inhibitions, and making violence… and sudden love more likely.

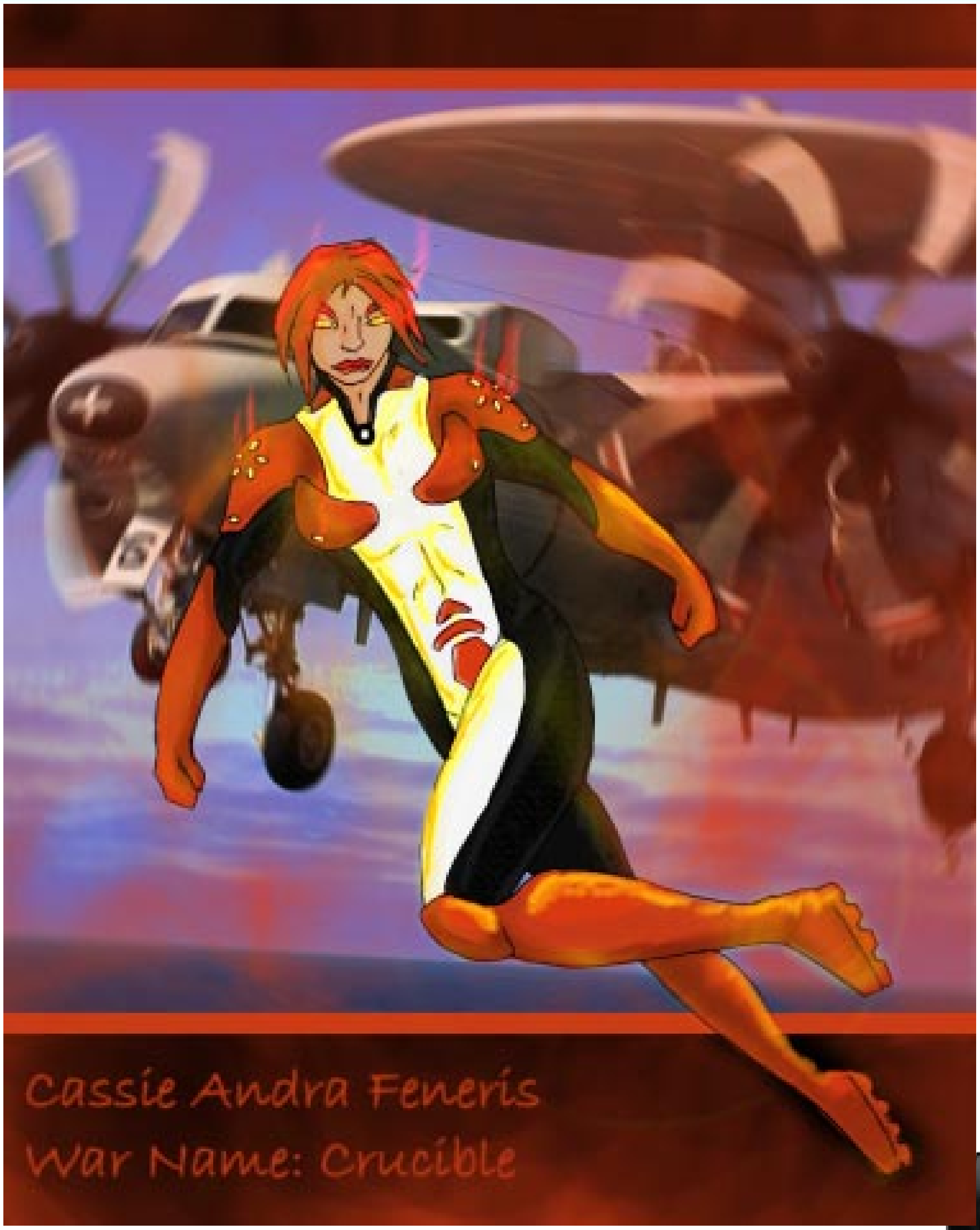
30. Simon Uluvric, one of the nation’s most uncompromising politicians, a Lifer speaker expected to eventually succeed Fairfax Dacoveney, dies in a car accident. Immediately, questions swirl around the circumstances of his death, and conspiracy theories abound. Are any of them true?

31. Several rookie AOG cells in the central United States have recently fallen to FBI undercover ops. Each of the cells had e-copies of the 2106 edition of Closed: The Manual of Pro-Life Tactical Doctrine in their possession, however their copy was not the version published by the AOG. Instead, their copies had several major errors that let them be infiltrated, and may have compromised other associated cells. How long have these fake copies of Closed been in circulation, who put them out, and how many Lifers have bought into them?

32. Two years ago Atomic Fox II (Abel Hinojosa Jr) was an up and coming Termite saboteur and expert thief. Of course, that was before he got his girlfriend pregnant and discovered his gene-mods couldn’t safely be passed to his offspring. Devastated, his girl crossed the lines for an abortion. He’s been rethinking a lot of his decisions since then. Choicer prosecutors have offered Atomic Fox a deal: just hang up the costume and disappear, and no Choicer cop will look too hard for you. He’s considering taking the deal, but is more worried about how his own side (especially his dad, the first Atomic Fox) will react to his surrender.

33. The LIBERTY Wolves stalk Pensacola. Operating without sanction, these rookie metahumans consider themselves the successors to the disbanded Rainbow LIBERTY, and like their predecessors, seek to protect the city’s embattled gay and Choicer pagan community. Capable of

surprising brutality and remarkable effectiveness for such an inexperienced team, the Wolves have managed to put several Lifer Combat Types into the hospital. So far, the LIBERTY Wolves have stopped just short of killing their Lifer adversaries.



34. A Minnesota family discovers an intact and abandoned Lifer strike base on their land. They report their find to the proper authorities, who quickly take over their newly purchased land. The Choicer intelligence community, as well as the US military are anxious for a look into the day to day operations of the War-era AOG, while the Lifers are desperate to recover or destroy the bunker's contents before they're closely examined.

35. Taking inspiration from her suit's mythological namesake, Victory (Kelis Marguse) an Atlanta pilot who operates independently of the Choicer command structure, holds an air duel in hopes of finding a lover for the Beltane Rites. A few days before the sabbat, Victory books time at the Linewerks Proving Ground in the Utah badlands, offering herself to any Choicer combat pilot who can bring her down in a simulated dogfight. Civilians and media gather to watch the duel from the outskirts of the desert test area.

36. A group of college kids operating in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex use a set of old model Persephone hardsuits stolen from a Choicer armory to become vigilantes.

37. Seventeen cryo-frozen embryos and their life support tanks are stolen from RESCUE International's Dallas exo-womb facility. The stolen embryos belong to prominent Choicer families across the Southwest, and within 12 hours of the crime, RESCUE is contacted with ransom demands. Lifer and Choicer metahumans, assisted by RESCUE's own combat volunteers, work together to teach the kidnappers some things are utterly beyond forgiveness.

38. A bar or restaurant the characters frequent is threatened with a government shutdown, thanks to a hostile bureaucrat from the opposite side. Using what little pull his position in the city government gives him, the bureaucrat has slapped the bar with dozens of minor fines, health code violations, unnecessary inspections and the like over the last couple of weeks.

39. A disgruntled ex-Lifer Block Mother posts the 'neural target states' (effectively the instructions) for mastering the fearsome (and highly classified) Dying of Choice Object Philosophy on the Mesh. Now anyone capable of learning Philosophies can master D.O.C., but the wide exposure also gives Choicer psychologists and medics a better chance to develop a countermeasure.

40. For the first time since the league dissolved in the late 2050s, Choicer and Lifer metahumans will face each other in an Orbital Sumo match. The competitors will battle high over the Indian Ocean; any tactic or dirty trick is acceptable, as long as nobody dies.

41. Unknown metahumans have destroyed "Alternate Seven", a secret and heavily fortified Lifer base in Kenya. A nearby city was devastated during the assault.

42. A graduating coven of thirteen of the Moonweaver School's most gifted Neo-Witch Midwives commit suicide en masse, just days after the implantation of their nanonics. Before taking their lives, the priestesses each recorded a nearly identical statement, pleading for forgiveness for their crimes against the pre-born.

43. A group of cyber-enhanced mercenaries in Chicago is raiding abortion clinics for drugs, scavenged nanotech and salable genetic material, and leaving Lifer graffiti at the crime scenes to throw investigators off their trail.

44. An ambitious young cyber-engineer codenamed Mithrial (Luke Sandoval), along with his bodyguard Bathysphere (Heather Contreras) has set up a weapons forge somewhere deep under Boston. Working through well designed android intermediaries, the arms dealer has offered to begin manufacturing weapons exclusively for the Lifer nation if the price is right. The implication, of course, is that if the Lifer's don't meet his price he'll sell to the Choicers, who probably will.

45. WatchWraith ("Baby" Erik Del Mar), a highly decorated 'Neverborn' intelligence agent, is gunned down while leaving an NYC stripclub. His shooter used some weird kind of nano-toxin designed specifically to target Neverborn, which prevented him from going intangible or keying in his other metahuman talents.

46. Returning home after a non-violent clinic demonstration, several 'civilian' members of the Lifer movement find strange ebony gemstones scattered around their homes. Forensic tests indicate the odd gems, which correspond to no known element on the periodic table, are of metahuman origin and are worth huge amounts, for their rarity if nothing else. Nobody is sure if the gems were left as a gift or as a warning.

47. An extremely well-organized 'die-in', put together by a hyper-intelligent Lifer Ultra Mind manages to bring San Francisco to a screeching halt during the morning rush hour. Just like he has in Topeka and Norfolk, Count 73 (Sam Horsley) plans to continue the die-ins until local businesses and the city government collapse under the financial weight of his disruptions.

48. White Lady Katasha Merris served as high priestess of the Austin covenstead for more than two decades, earning the respect of the city's Lifer population, as well as her pagan followers. Three days ago, she succumbed to a stroke. The city's moderate Lifer citizens have vowed not to protest as her funeral procession winds its way through Austin's large Choicer district.

49. The Covenant has sunk several millions dollars into the development of the Minerva Assault

Recon Hardsuit, a stealth Shell with impressive sensory, electronic warfare and maneuverability options. The government plans to officially unveil the Minerva ARH during this years Ostara air shows, despite the suit's potentially lethal design flaws.

50. As two Lifer Closers battle each other for dominance for leadership of the movement's Direct Action faction, dozens of Choicer clinics and covenheaths have been destroyed, and human causalities are mounting by the day. The two heir appearants of the DA crowd, Birthright (Manuel Charles Rivera) and Murder Mix (Frank LeRoy) are randomly striking Choicer targets throughout the country, trying to outdo the other, and to prove their credentials as their chaotic faction's new leader.

51. A small sect of Lifer pagans has approached the Covenant's metahumans in hopes of learning the Mother of Storms Object Philosophy. The Coven of White Lilies hopes to use the weather manipulation Philosophy to blunt the effect of hurricanes on the Lifer dominated Gulf Coast.

52. The second Ghost Boss (Claudia Riggs), granddaughter of the War-Era soldier, approaches Fairfax Dacoveney and the upper echelons of the Army's leadership with a request. Already a well respected combat type, she wants her grandmother's gene-line, and the intangibility powers that are her birth right, in the hopes of becoming a better soldier.

53. In the spirit of détente, Lifer-ran adoption agencies change their long standing policies. They will allow Choicer families to adopt Lifer children under circumstances.

54. Harry Stance, one of the Covenant's most honored Covenguards, is removed from his position as a Woven Circle bodyguard after his long-term

affair with Louis LaSalle, a prominent Lifer attorney comes to light.

55. Kloe-Tech, a Denver based cybernetics firm owned primarily by Lifer shareholders, has recently secured a patent for a next generation artificial nerve fiber that offers increased sensitivity at a fraction of the cost of older nerve fibers. Kloe-Tech hopes that their new patent will eventually drive rival megacorp Diana Cybernetica, the company that builds the majority of the Covenant's bionics, out of business.

56. The Covenant begins a massive urban renewal and investment program across America. Offering job training, loans and grants to low income families of all political affiliations, the Covenant hopes to win the hearts and minds of unaligned Americans. If they can break some of the political hold that the Enclaves have over the Lifer poor, or force Lifer politicos to expend some of their own resources to counter the Choicer PR push, so much the better.

57. Work is proceeding on a stable wormhole intended to link Earth with the Choicer out-colony on Renault 402. If the wormhole works as expected, within a few years, people will be able to cross the distance between worlds with a single step.

58. Five years ago, Woodworker (Carson Achili) used his plant-based mutations to murder three APEX metahumans during a botched raid on the Moonweaver School. Now, with his execution date looming, Woodworker claims that he's mastered a deadly new Philosophy while imprisoned. According to him, his health is directly tied to the biosphere's, and if he's executed the resulting eco-disaster will render much of the Pacific Northwest uninhabitable.

59. The Lifer flagged orbital shuttle *Trockman* crashes shortly after reentry, impacting dead center in San Francisco's Half Grey community. The city's Half Grey population already despises the Lifers, especially their martyred war-leader Artemis, and the deadly crash sparks savage riots.

60. King Kilowatt (Alec Taylor) and his wife Jane Hammer, two low end Choicer-aligned metahumans based out of Sacramento, stand accused of murdering and cannibalizing non-combatant Lifer Powereds to gain their powers.

61. Fifteen year old Choicer celebrity/combat volunteer Firefall (Stephen Saldana-Perez) is in custody after unleashing a lethal firestorm during a weekend clinic defense. The young pyrokinetic claims that someone was able to hack his internal fire control circuits, forcing him to open fire on his friends.

62. Tensile, a heavily modified full conversion cyborg who picked up some merc work with the Choicer Army during the Abortion War, launches a viscous assault on the Lesbos Island Beanstalk. She's been upgraded beyond all previous design specs. Her motives are unknown, as are her activities since War's End.

63. Clayton Cassidy, better known as Life Tank, is probably the most infamous Lifer ever to fight. He's been dead for decades, but some of his family are still around. His century-old mother's home in Detroit burned to the ground, and a forgotten second cousin had his neck snapped as he left work. Someone is hunting the family of the first Lifer closer.

64. A prominent cult of Asteru neo-pagans have gathered in the old growth forests of Northern California to celebrate (and imitate) Odin's agony on the World Tree. Believers are crucified on one of the giant sequoias for the better part of a day. Superhumanly durable believers endure even more horrific tests of pain.

65. The Stonecutter mercantile sphere wants to improve its relations with the Lifer nation. An honor guard of Stonecutter diplomats are fêted at Boston's most elite locales. Meanwhile, theological tensions between Stonecutter clerics of the *Always* and their

evangelical Christian counterparts threaten to derail the trade talks.

66. Switch Hit and Pinch Hit (Elena and Thomas Cruz), two arrogant young Choicer power-thieves are the media-friendly face of the pro-incest Powered set. The twin's Meshblog and interviews are widely broadcast, giving them an unexpectedly wide following among other iconoclast Powereds.

67. Fairfax Dacoveney's oldest daughter, Lindsey Dacoveney-Stoles, gives birth to his first grandson Evan, in a high security ward of Boston's oldest Lifer-ran hospital. The Lifer politico incites minor controversy by allowing a former Neo-Witch Midwife who had converted to the Lifer cause attend his grandson's birth.

68. An art gallery in Los Angeles is celebrating the Candlemas sabbat with an intentionally provocative show: Martyrs to Choice. All the pieces depict or symbolize a fallen Choicer soldier of personal significance to the artist, including several pieces celebrating Choicer combatants accused of war crimes.

69. Responding to a bold series of posts on Termite Mesh-forums, every terrorist prankster in the country is trying to outdo their rivals with a daring series of non-lethal protest pranks to celebrate April Fool's, 2107. The bigger and more audacious caper, the more imaginative the scam, the higher a young Termite's status within the movement will be, assuming they survive to see April 2nd.

70. Metamorphis North, the Detroit-based Choicer arms manufacturer, unveils new combat technology, which they hope will enter active service within the next few years. Using a combination of limited AI and neuro-cybernetics, their new Shell prototype will allow a single pilot to control multiple cyber-chassis simultaneously, forming a tactical hive-mind.

71. New York's fashion week has become another unexpected battleground in the ongoing cultural war. Lifer fashion house Tyric Else is garnering controversy by taking traditionally Choicer styles- the robes, organic-deco elements, and athemes- and applying them to Lifer culture.

72. The Atlanta Enclave recently fired more than half of its police force, after completing a two year investigation into police corruption. The mass terminations have gutted the force. The Enclave's government is desperate for trustworthy, experienced Lifer investigators to refill the Atlanta PD's depleted ranks.

73. Covenant New General Delores Ravenstone has angered Bastian elements within the military by urging the Woven Circle to alter the nation's uniform standards. If she gets her way, obviously pagan symbols will no longer required be on the Covenant's weapons, uniforms or armor. Despite her military background, she is a Dianic Wiccan, who wants there to be a strong division between the Covenant's religious and military aspects.

74. As a recruiting tool, the Covenant has begun fielding a flight of light reconstruction cyborg 'mecha musumane' styled on famous Choicer shell suits and starships. Despite their comically sexy stylings, the cyborgs are surprisingly effective.

75. The teenaged son of Victoria Villalobos, managing director of RESCUE International is assassinated by a sniper while attending a Dallas high school. No faction takes credit for the kill, and none of America's intelligence agencies have the first clue why it happened.

76. The Piedmont Ave Women's Center, in Rapid City, SD has survived over a century of active operations without ever experiencing any violence more severe than the occasional graffiti tagging. Though the clinic sits dead center inside a hot zone of sporadic Lifer violence, some quirk of logistics has protected it from assault. That changes when a precognitive flash indicates the clinic's luck is at an end, and it will be heavily assaulted by a Lifer strike team within the day.

77. A Lifer metahuman is approached by a respected contact within the Army, and asked to contribute a sample of their DNA to the gene-sculptors on Kodiak. Especially trustworthy Powereds might actually be invited to Kodiak to begin a post-human family with one of the island's many "CFL Kids".

78. The Lifer blog "Ninth" offers a hundred thousand dollar reward for confirmed tips about high profile Choicer crimes. The blog, and their backers, hope that by throwing enough money at the problem, people will start coming forward with damaging gossip.

79. A police chase through the streets of Pensacola quickly spirals out of control. The criminals are crossline punks from Orlando, without much more of a plan to cause some trouble and pull some heists in the heart of Lifer country. Local Lifer Powereds quickly join the chase to teach the punks a lesson, and Choicer metahumans are forced to keep the thugs alive in the face of a post-human street riot.

80. A killer is stalking St. Louis' Bastian community. Over the last two years, at least a dozen Bastian boys, between the ages of 11-16 been found dead. The local police have had no luck catching the killer, or preventing his crimes, and the city's Bastians have turned to brutal vigilante justice to protect themselves. The city's Lifer populace is actually assisting some of the more level-headed Bastians, because the cult's violence against innocent Lifers is turning into a disaster for both factions.

81. An Iranian petrochemical giant attempts a hostile takeover of the dummy corporations that 'own' Kodiak Island. The foreign corporation has no knowledge or interest in the island's true significance- they simply want to own the last untapped oil reserve in North America.

82. An irresponsible Lifer combat type answering to Padlocke (Virginia Reston) works as an informant and double agent for the Choicers. She gives the Choicers some minor tactical data, and teaches them countermeasures for the Metaphysical Padlock Philosophy she takes her soldier-name from. The money is damn good, but Padlocke's real motivation is a desire to learn some proprietary Choicer Philosophies, and an almost fetishistic lust for the faith's elegant priestess-midwives.

83. Nearly fifty Neverborn, the world's largest gathering of that subspecies, have assembled in a tent city near the Montana/Canadian border. Lead by a charismatic Evangelical preacher who has taken the infamous war-name Silenced Rat (Rev. Randall Oakridge), they plan to expand their squat into an actual city, forming a unique new Enclave in the wilderness. They have already rallied several Untainted clans to their banner.

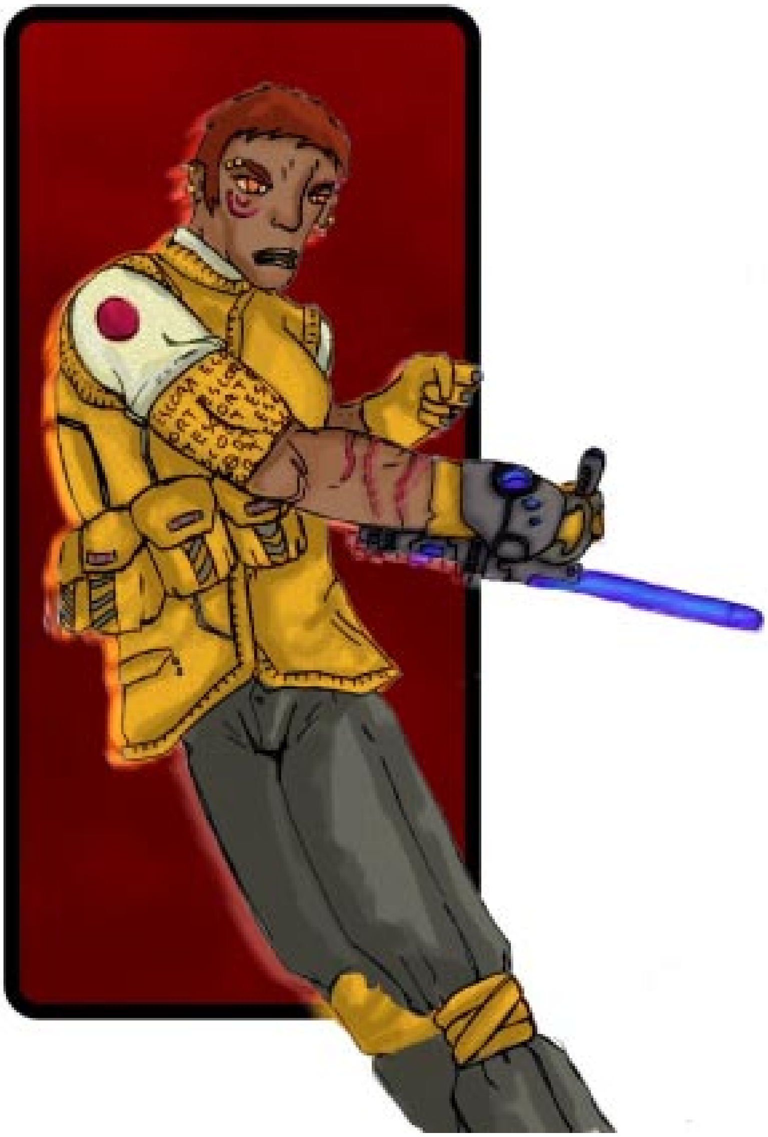
84. The Covenant must contact hundreds of current and former patients, informing them that the priestess-midwife who treated them succumbed to the D.O.C. thoughtvirus. Since the virus can be spread simply by eye contact, its imperative the patients be contacted as soon as possible, though discretion and patient confidentiality must be maintained somehow.

85. With great fanfare, the Covenant begins construction of a massive artificial island, an order of magnitude larger than Aradia, in international waters off the California coast. When completed in the mid 2130s, the mega-structure will become an independent pagan nation, as settlers from embattled America populate the artificial micro-continent.

86. An extraterrestrial virus, which seems to target mostly Lifechained mutates, is accidentally released on Earth. Though (mostly) non-lethal, the 'flu' incapacities a huge percentage of Earth's Lifechained soldiers. Immediate tactical advantage to the Choicers, who have fewer Lifechains among their military, and plenty of troops mission ready, thanks to a deep well of cyborgs and other post-human talent.

87. Autumn Lord, a "CFL Kid" with impressive entropy and ecological control talents has never known any life other than the Army. Like many of

the Kids, he doesn't even have a civilian identity. He's a weapon through and through. However, unlike many of his squaddies, Autumn Lord wants something more. He suspects his gene-line was stolen from Lilithsong, a War-era Choicer hero, and wants to find out more about his genetic 'father.' He also is intensely curious about a religion he's been told is evil his entire short life, and may even defect, if he can overcome his intense culture shock.



88. The son of Brazil's president marries the psi-hero Tragedy (Roland Chanson), one of the most experienced Choicer intelligence agents on the planet. The marriage cements an important political alliance between the Choicers and Brazil; in exchange for ecological aid, Brazil will provide most favored nation trading status, and the two Beanstalk-capable nations will work together to squash the Lifer's plans for a Great Lakes Beanstalk.

89. Mesh-based suicide clubs proliferate among the Covenant's young and desperate. Dedicated to Xix Tab, the Mayan goddess of the hanged, some of the deaths are acts of loneliness and depression. Others are recorded protests or bizarre acts of ritual magic, intended to advance the cult's own agenda. All the deaths, whatever the reason behind them, end up on the Mesh somewhere, though.

90. Neo-Witches dedicated to the dark goddess Hectate began a brutal purge of non-pagan Philosophy users. Viewing Object Philosophies as true magic, they want to take the power out of the hand of Christians and other barbarians. The terror cell starts small, killing or crippling low-level and unaligned post-humans. The witches manage to take down dozens of third stringers before they turn their attention to a recognizable Lifer Object Philosopher.

91. With near-earth space crowded with travelers returning home for the Ingathering, a exo-atmospheric pursuit of a minor Lifer criminal has disastrous repercussions. An unlucky shot clips the *Shahrukh,* a Choicer passenger liner. As that ship spirals out of control, it slams into three other vessels, all awaiting final approach clearance high over Tokyo Bay. Hundreds die, and the economic repercussions of the disaster are in the low billions. Boresight (Kenny Williams), the minor Lifer saboteur who caused the whole mess got away clean is now hiding in America's Lifer subculture, suddenly the most wanted man on planet.

92. Each year, the wealthiest, most elite women of the Covenant nation gather at an exclusive resort outside San Francisco to celebrate their own Beltane rite, and to plan the future of the nation. None of these women serve on the Woven Circle or any other elected office; instead, they are the financial and culture powers behind the throne. Bathed in the light of an Apollo field, and protected by a cadre of combat types, their rendezvous are the stuff of conspiracy theories and urban legends.

93. All the men and women, Powered and baseline human alike, who have used the war-name Choice over the decades are invited to attend a ceremony honoring them on Aradia's Isle.

94. The Firedance Free School, located outside Phoenix, AZ comes under scrutiny when it's revealed that as part of its curriculum, it uses psionic memory alteration and deep hypnosis to implant false memories of dying as a medieval witch in its students. Though the mem-plants are voluntary, the general public, and even most Choicer pagans worry about the psychological effect of implanting the memory of dying during the Inquisition in a 12 or 13 year old student.

95. An unknown Choicer terrorist hijacks the Stonecutter war ship *Spearthrust* while the vessel is on R&R stopover in Earthspace. The terrorists use the *Spearthrust's* particle beam to wipe a rented hall in downtown Cincinnati off the map. The White Rose Banquet held there is atomized, along with most of the guests of honor.

96. The AOG has placed an open bounty on Choicer Philosophy practitioners, but to claim the bounty, the targets must be delivered alive. The AOG wants to study exactly how the Choicers manifest their unique philosophies, the better to develop countermeasures. Captive Choicer psions will be taken to one of the Alternates, tested, and eventually executed when the research is over.

97. The Covenant military is considering completely eliminating the volunteer clinic defender program. In its place, they want to treat clinic defenders as 'citizen-soldiers'. Future combat volunteers and defenders still won't actually be soldiers, but will undergo standardized training, wear standardized armor, and have access to regular genetic and cybernetic upgrades. For many young activists, this scheme runs counter to the philosophy of personal choice and freedom that defines the movement.

98. The recently unearthed "Lacey List" details a mid 2030s scheme to use existing technology to create an artificial species nearly identical to the Neverborn. The document has been authenticated by several neutral and Choicer forensic document examiners, and even some Lifer experts grudgingly admit the document is probably genuine. The revelation completely undercuts the Neverborn's value as propaganda pieces, and sends many Neverborn into a deep (well, deeper than normal) depression.

99. A hacker attack by the machine-manipulating Lifer info-terrorist Locktime (Judy Rescue Walker) completely shuts down the Choicer info-net for more than an hour. No smartlight or Mesh servers function anywhere within the Covenant, with the exception of a few highly secured military servers. When service is finally restored, nobody is sure if the data has been corrupted; the shutdown was incidental to Locktime's real goal. Cybernetics schema, government documents, land records, even financial transactions all seem to be subtly comprimised- a word here, a pixel there, a letter or

two altered; finding reliable backups could take months.

100. A non-pagan documentary crew, lead by a young Mesh journalist named Dadis Stienbeck, are allowed unprecedented access to all levels of Covenant society. For one year, the reporters will observe the inner workings of the Woven Circle, an ordinary clinic in San Francisco, and a combat-ops unit, and tell their interrelated stories.

CONCEPT AND EXECUTION BY
CHRISTOPHER A. FIELD.

LAYOUT COMPLETED:
0146
JANUARY 22nd, 2009

ROE DAY

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